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Gibbens et al.

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(54) **METHOD AND SYSTEM FOR MULTIPLE VIEWS COMPUTER-AIDED-DESIGN INCLUDING PROPAGATION OF EDIT OPERATIONS ACROSS VIEWS WHILE ENSURING CONSTRAINTS CONSISTENCY**

(58) **Field of Classification Search**
CPC G06B 2219/35005; G06F 30/20; G06F 2111/04; G06F 2113/24
See application file for complete search history.

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(*) Notice: Subject to any disclaimer, the term of this patent is extended or adjusted under 35 U.S.C. 154(b) by 292 days.

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Primary Examiner — Bijan Mapar

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G06F 111/04 (2020.01)
G06F 113/24 (2020.01)

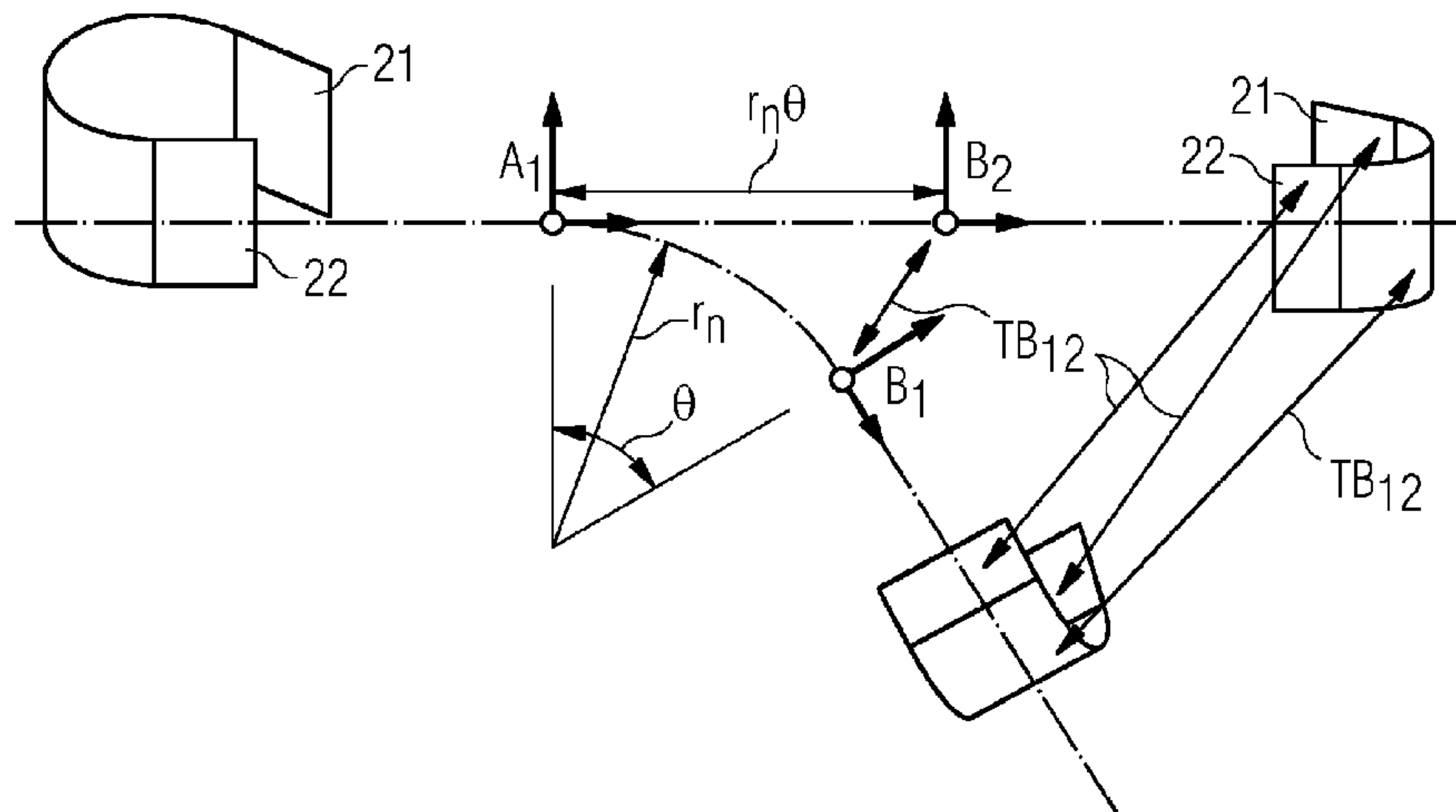
(57) **ABSTRACT**

A method of modifying a CAD system model performed on a data processing system includes receiving a dataset of co-ordinates representing an article in 2d, or in 3d and receiving 2d or 3d constraints respectively, to be applied to any changes to the dataset of co-ordinates for the article. A modification to be applied to the dataset is received and combined with the relevant 2d and 3d constraints to produce a constrained modification for each of the article and associated article. The constrained modification is solved in 2d and in 3d to determine whether a solution exists in which all constraints are met. If the solve is successful, the constrained modification is applied to each dataset simultaneously and, updated datasets are stored. If the solve fails, the constraints

(Continued)

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CPC **G06F 30/00** (2020.01); **G06F 2111/04** (2020.01); **G06F 2113/24** (2020.01)



may be reduced and the solve step repeated, or the process is terminated.

16 Claims, 13 Drawing Sheets

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FIG 1

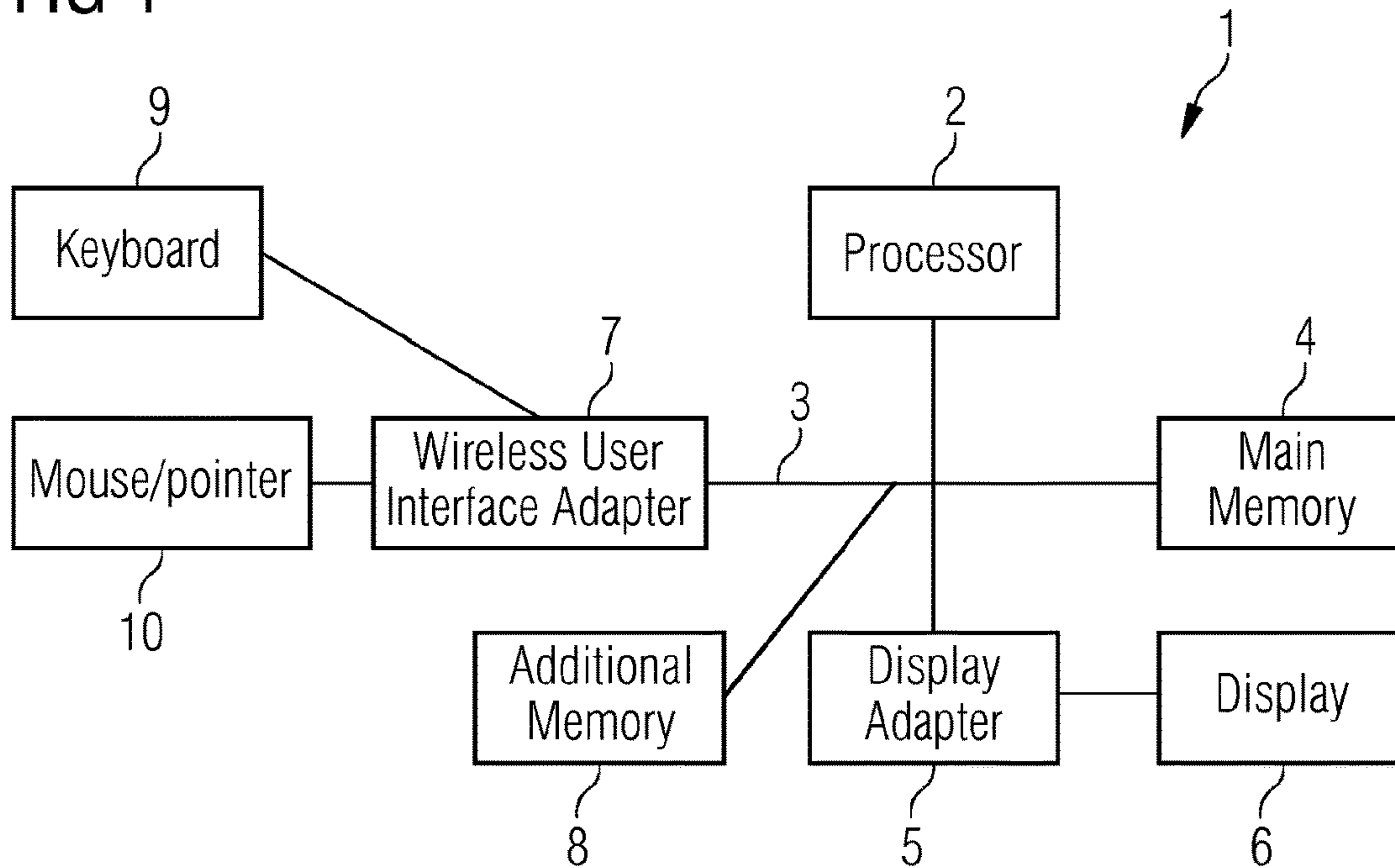


FIG 2

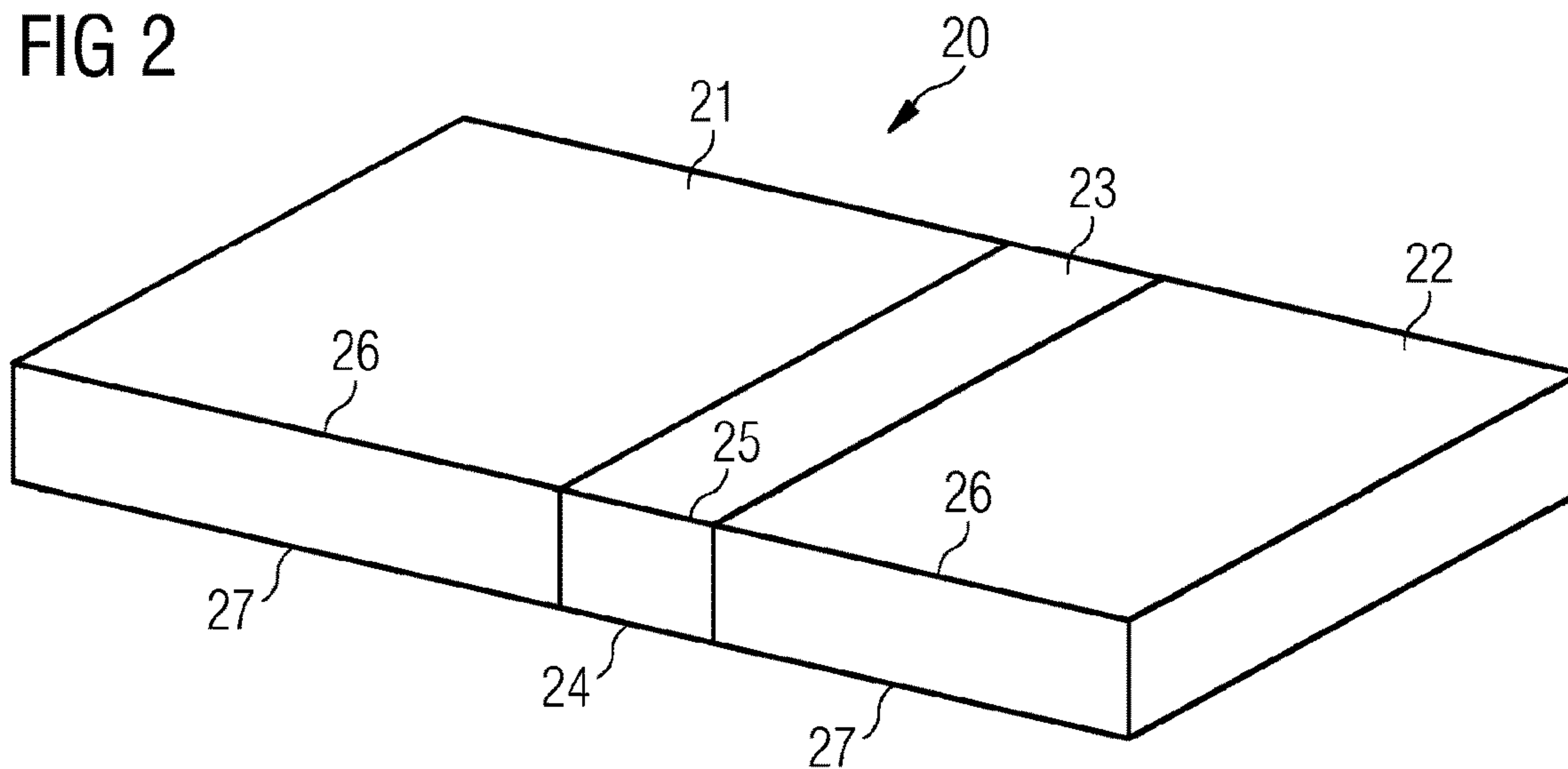


FIG 3

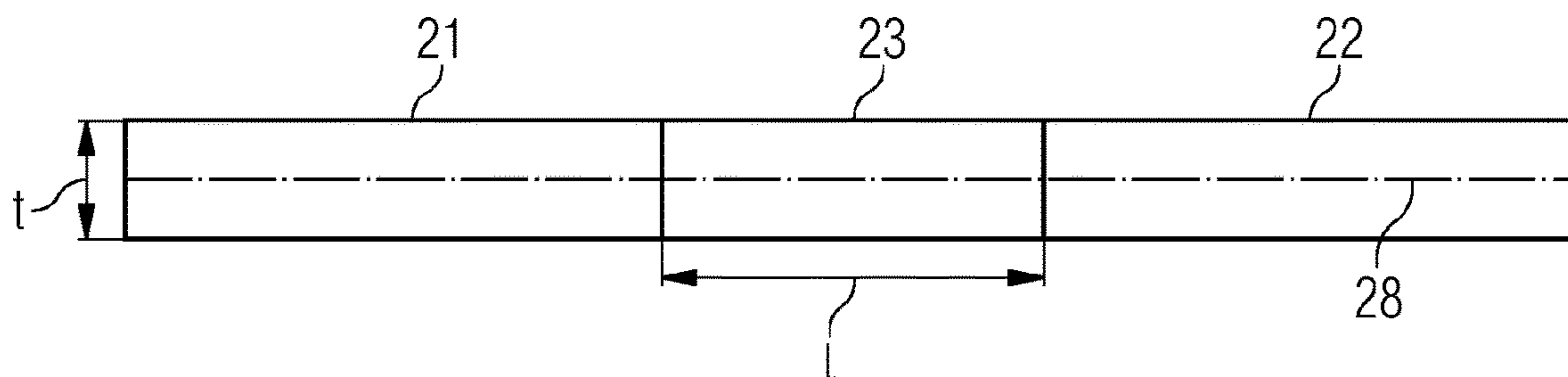


FIG 4

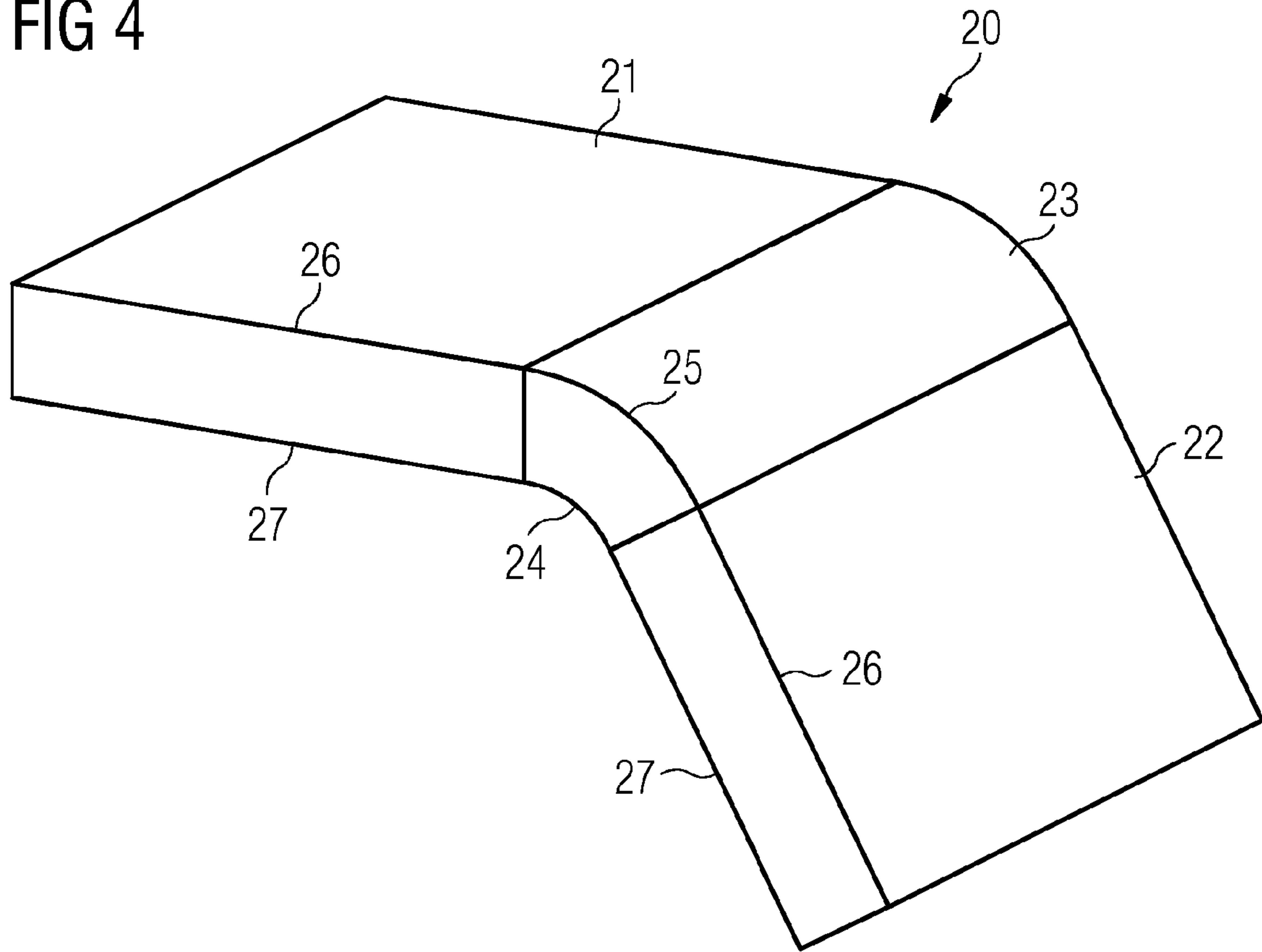


FIG 5

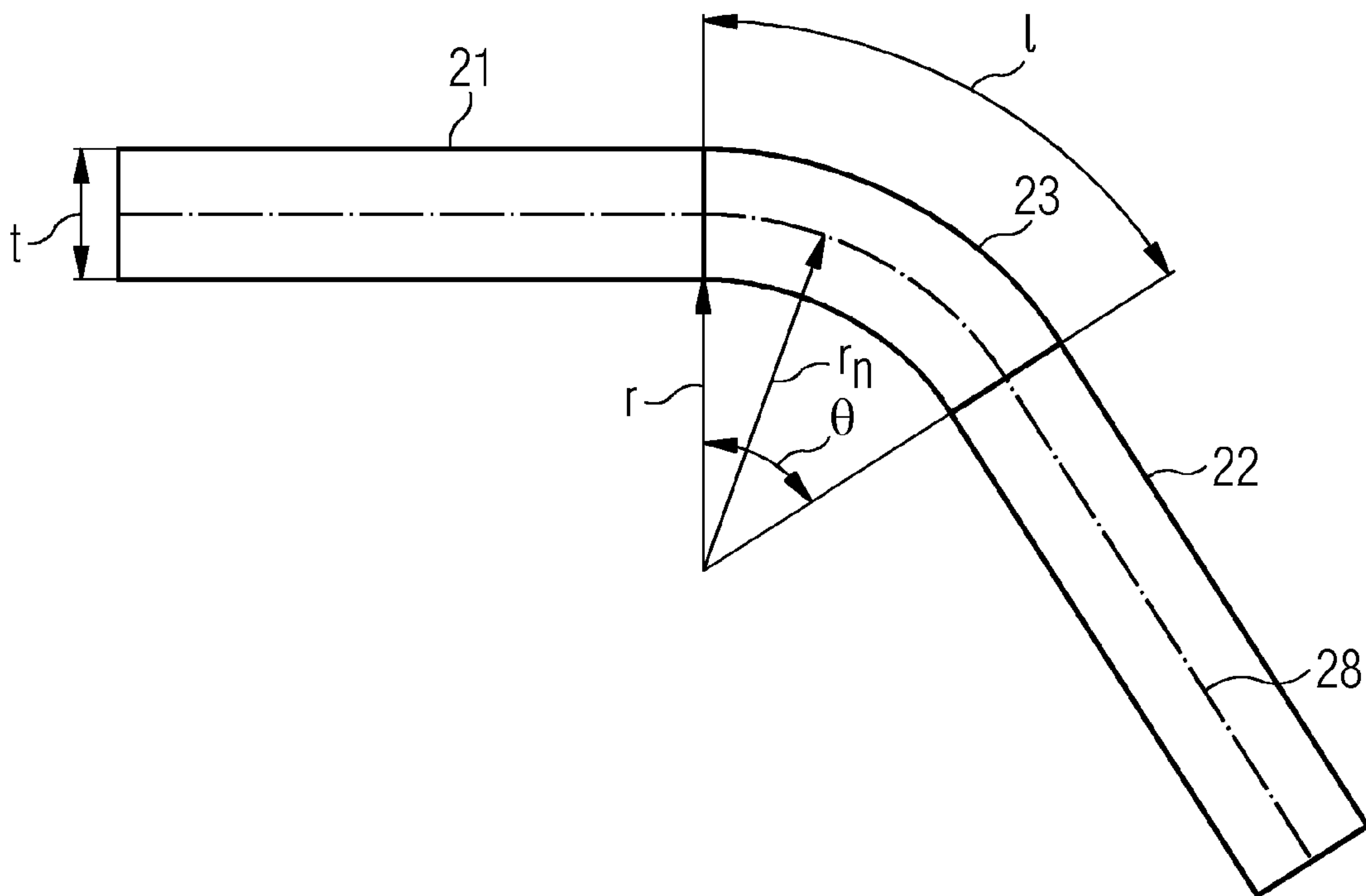


FIG 6a

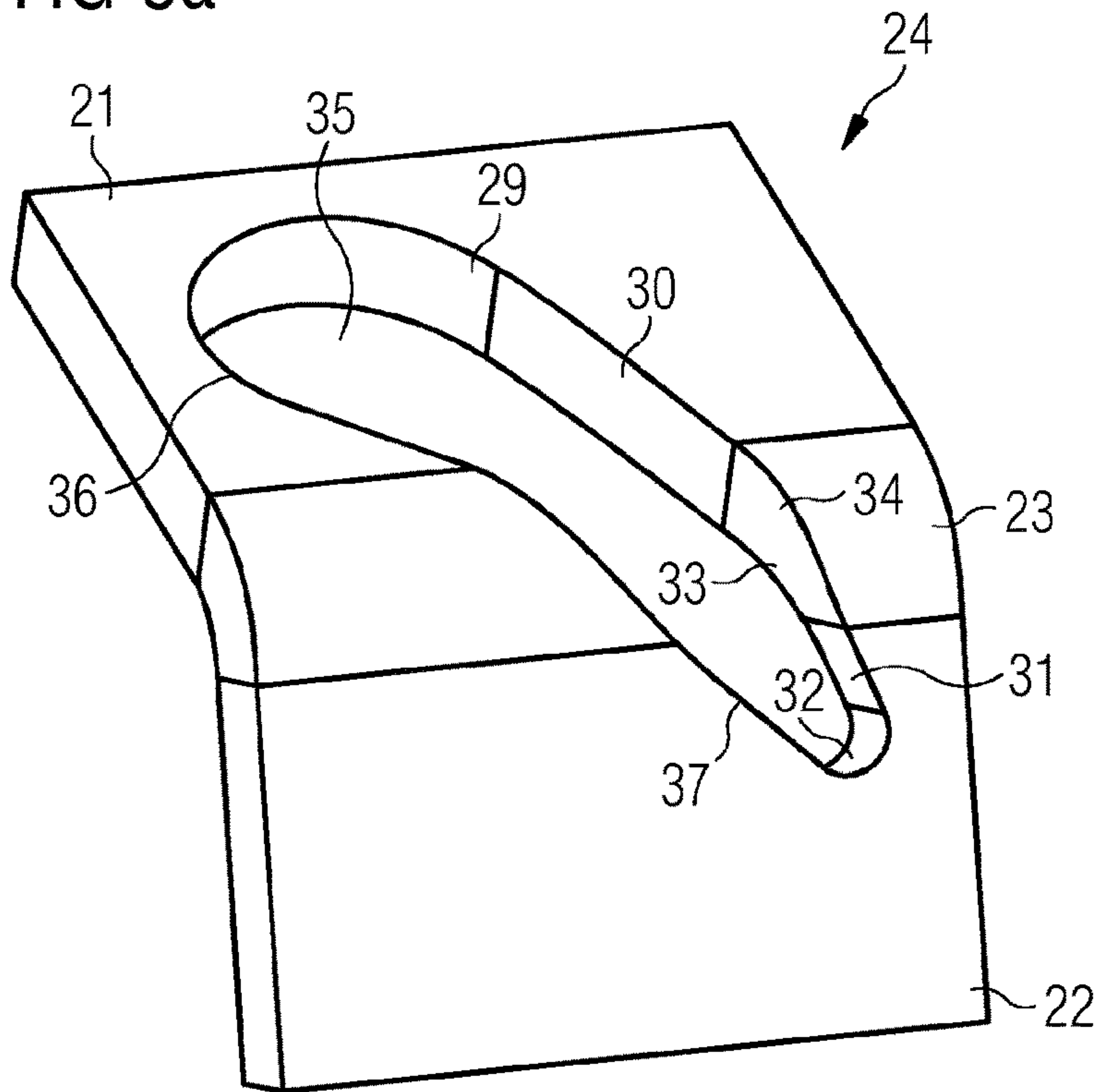


FIG 6b

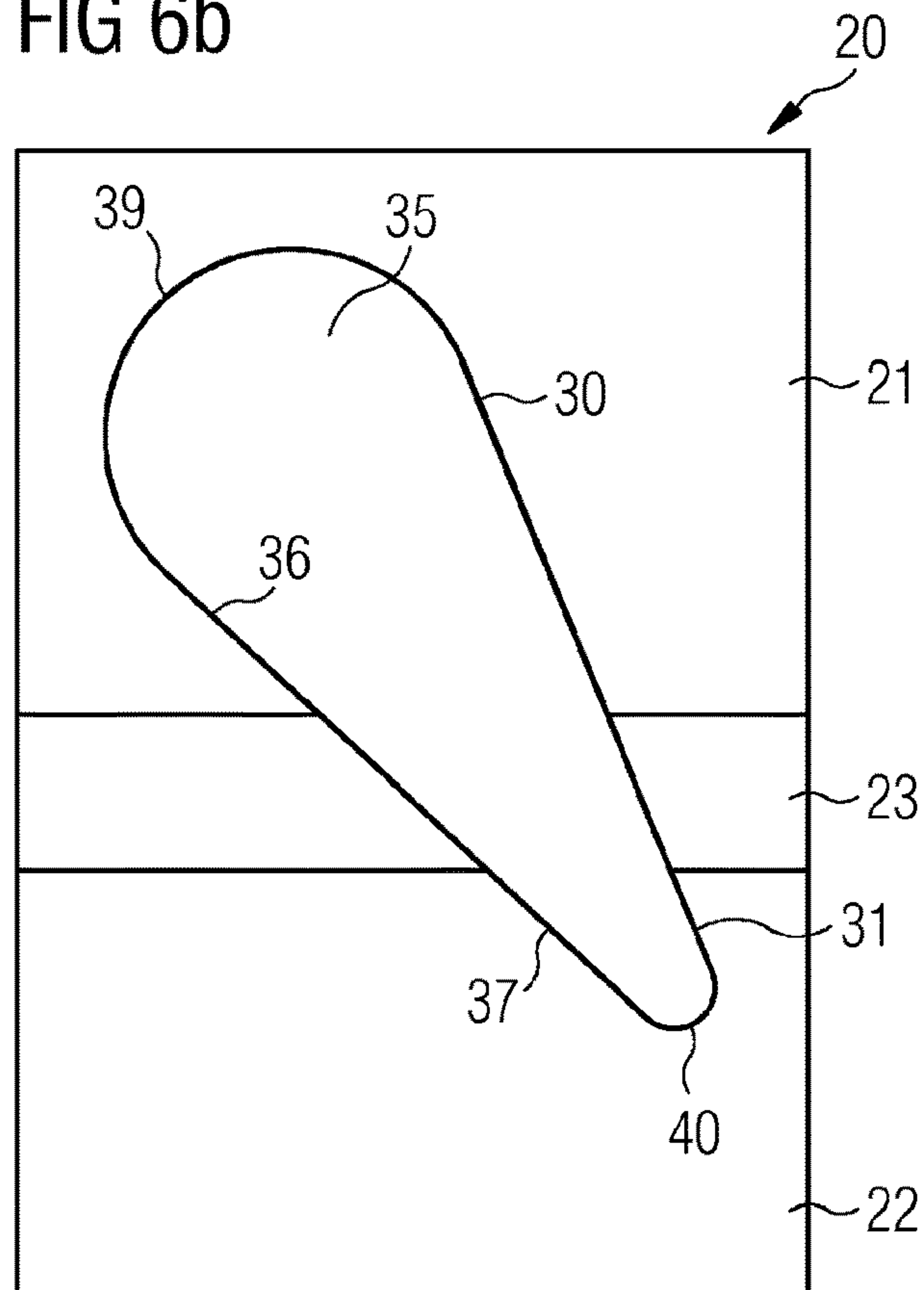


FIG 7a

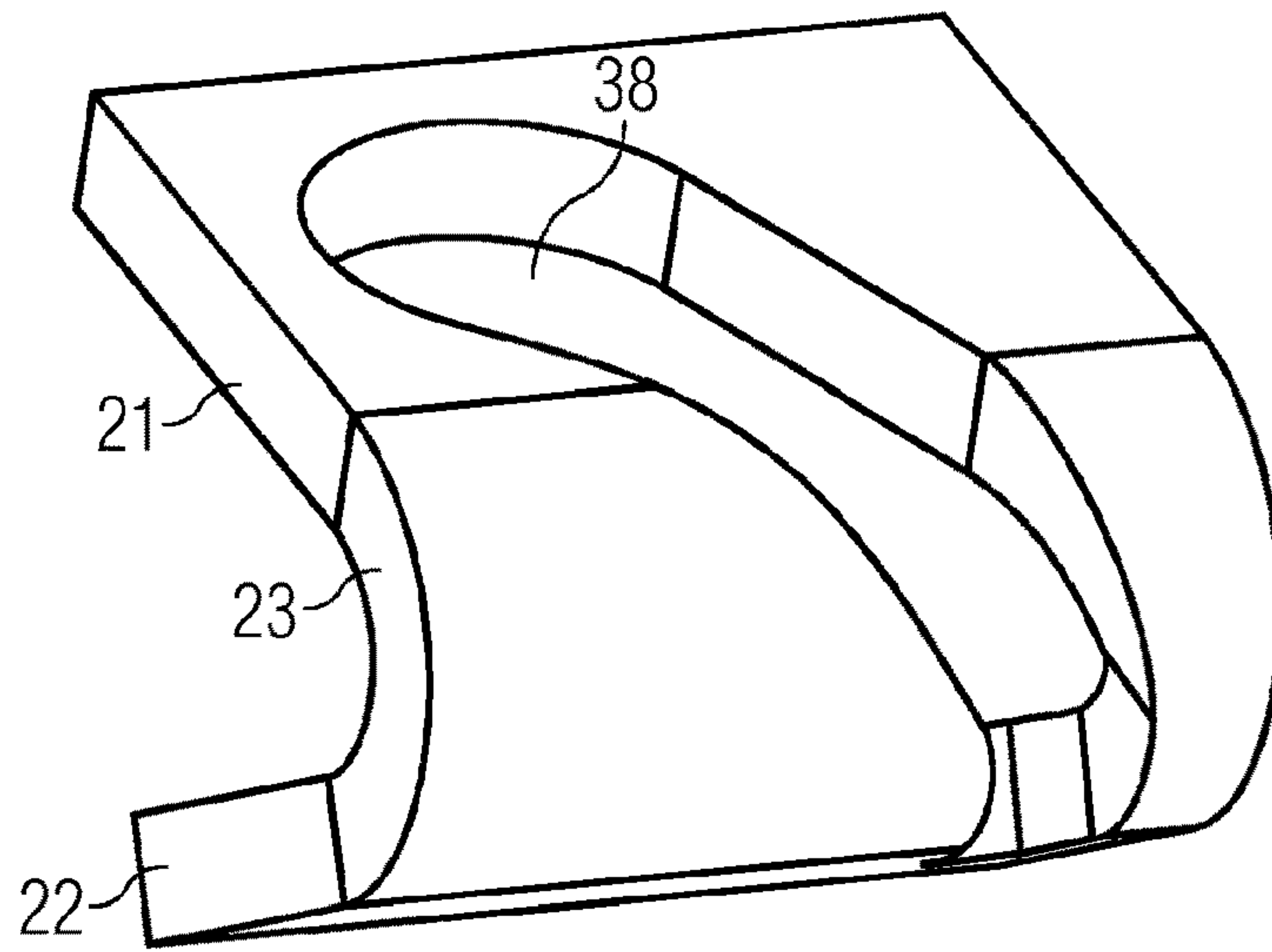


FIG 7b

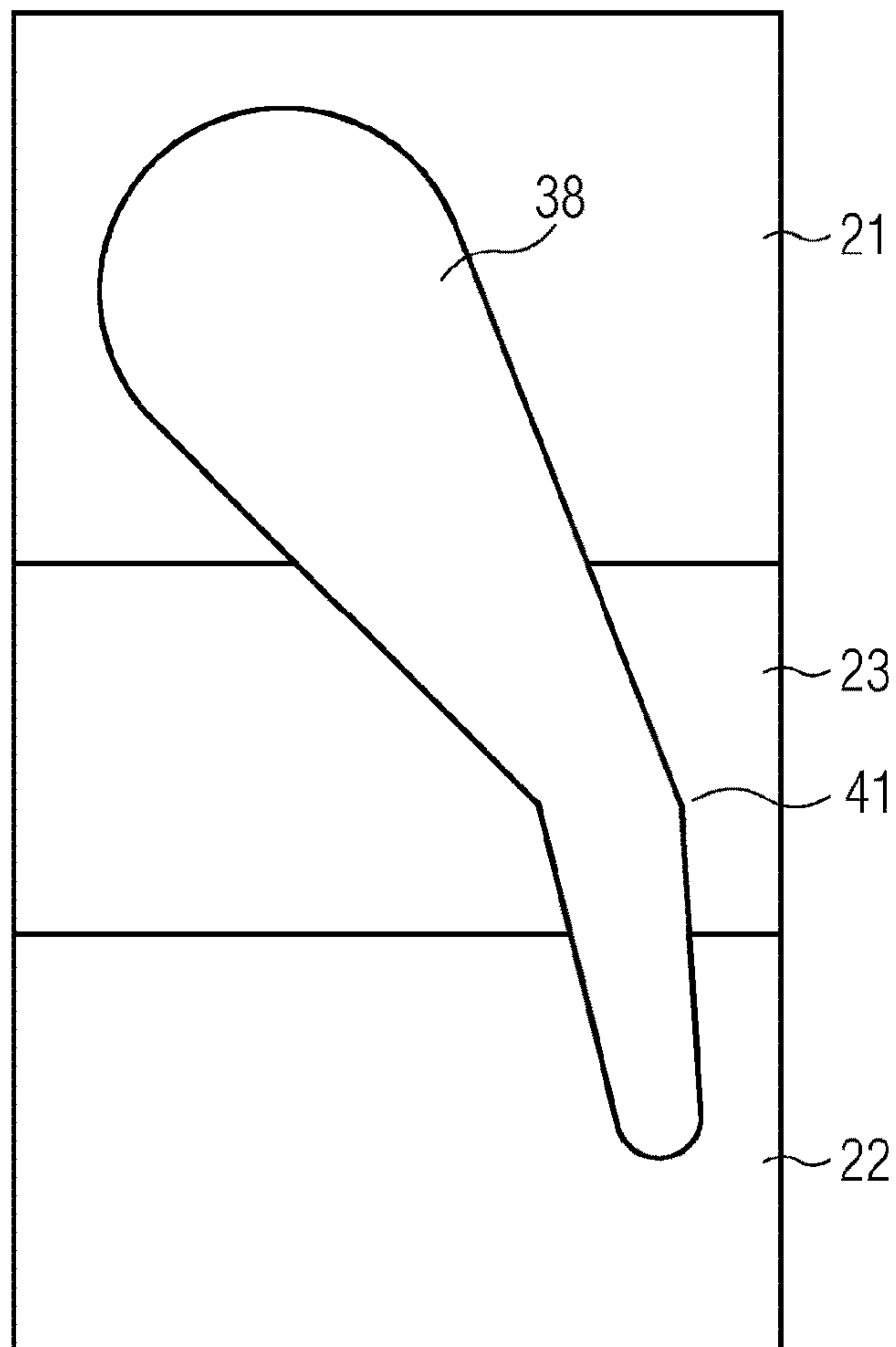


FIG 8

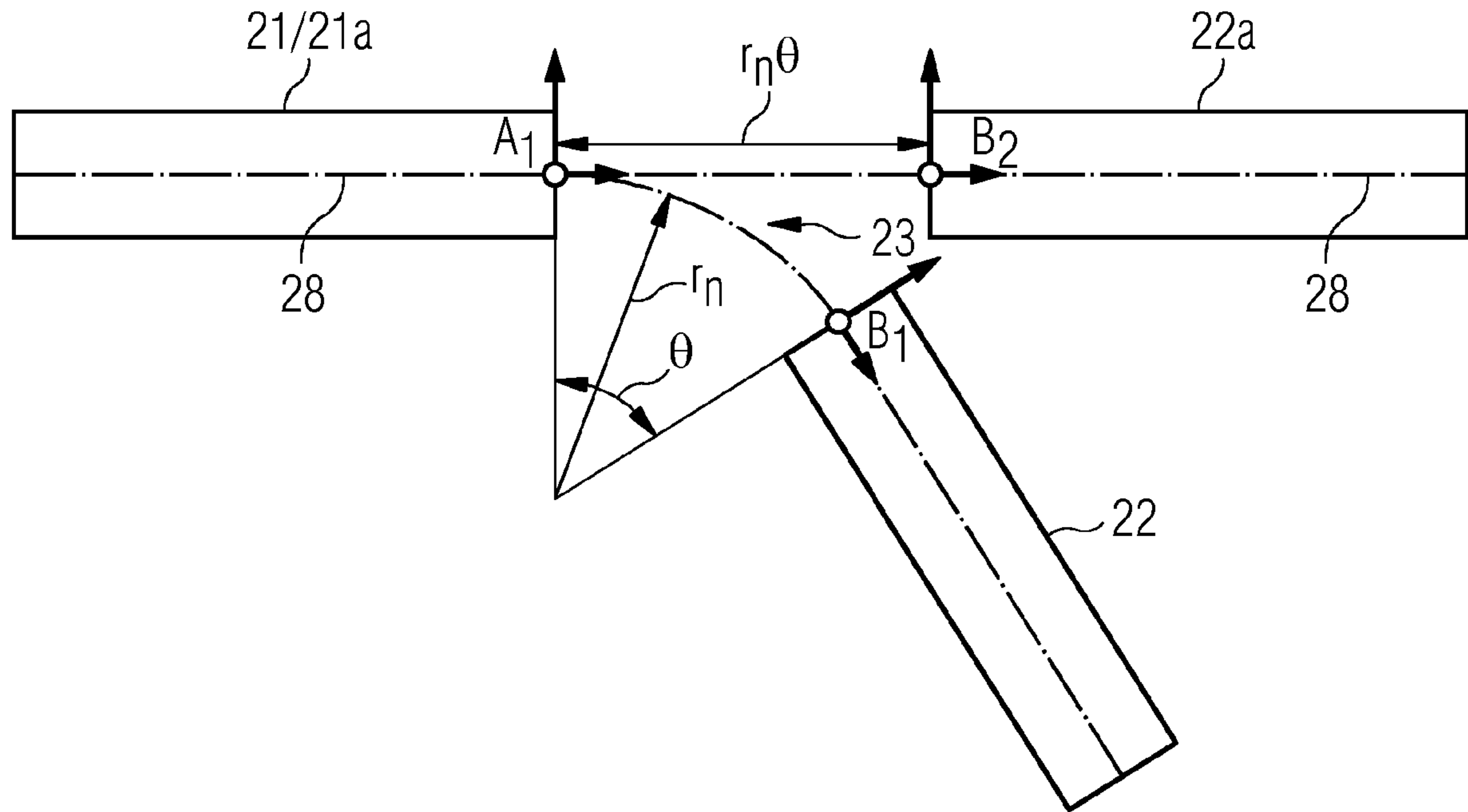


FIG 9

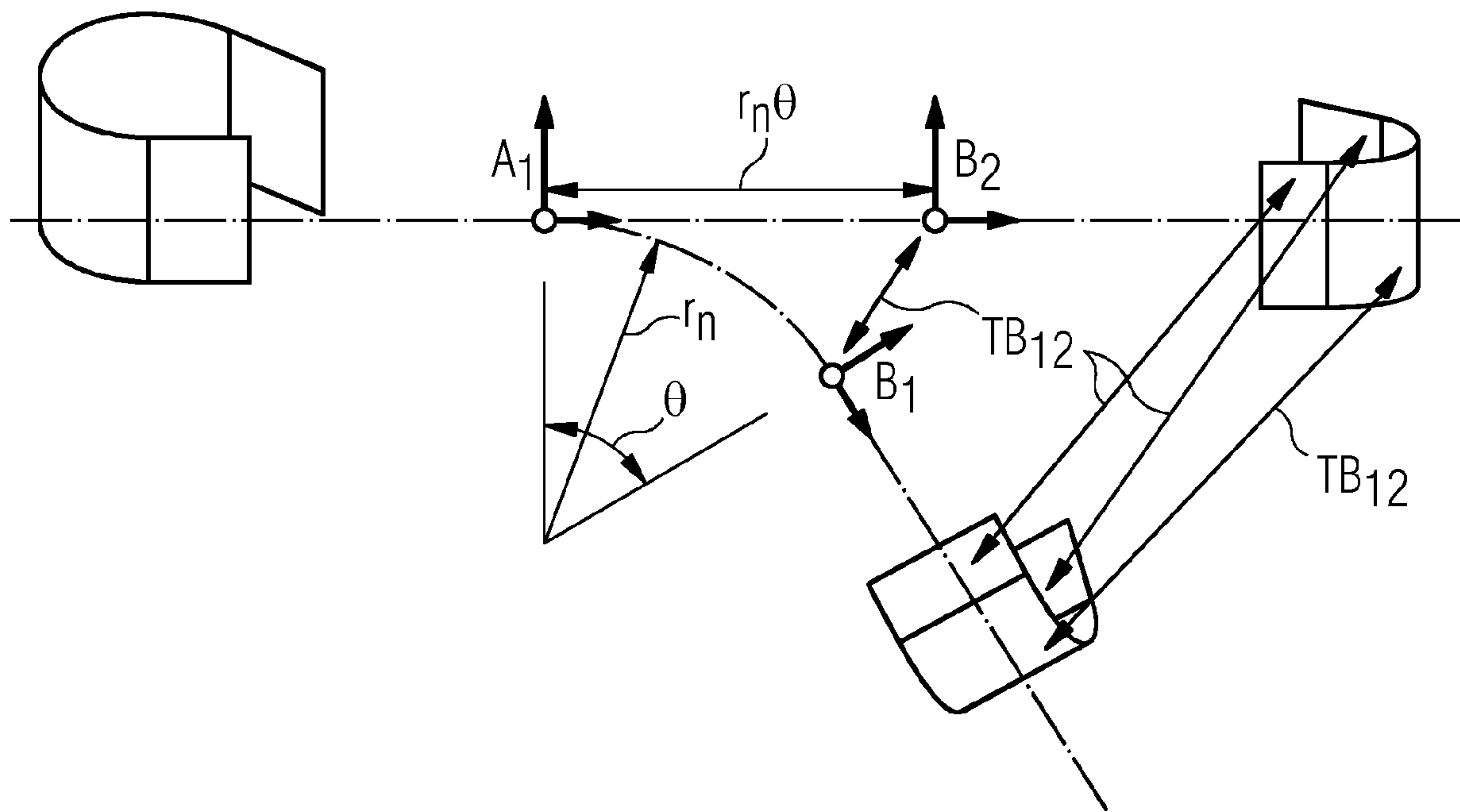


FIG 10

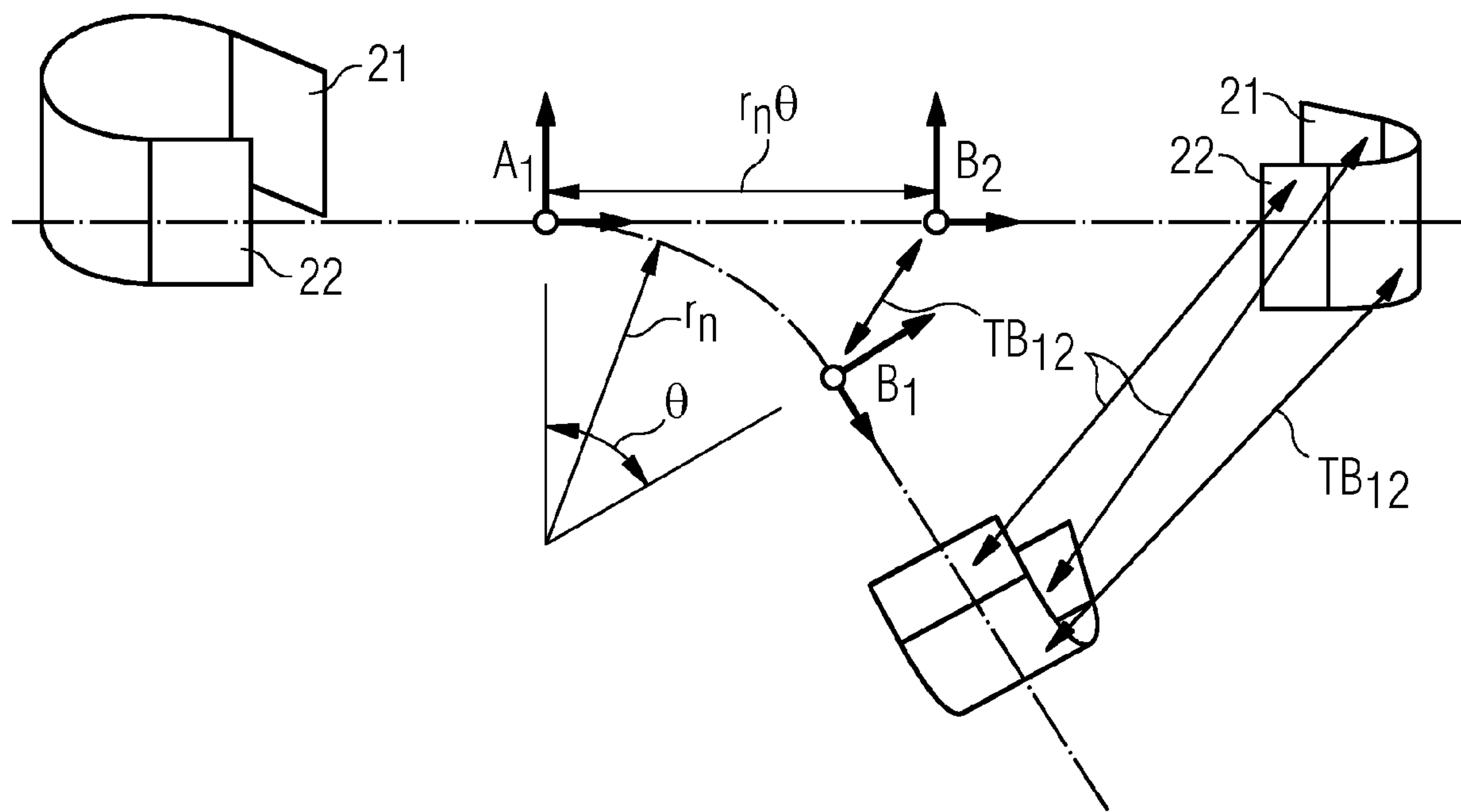


FIG 11a

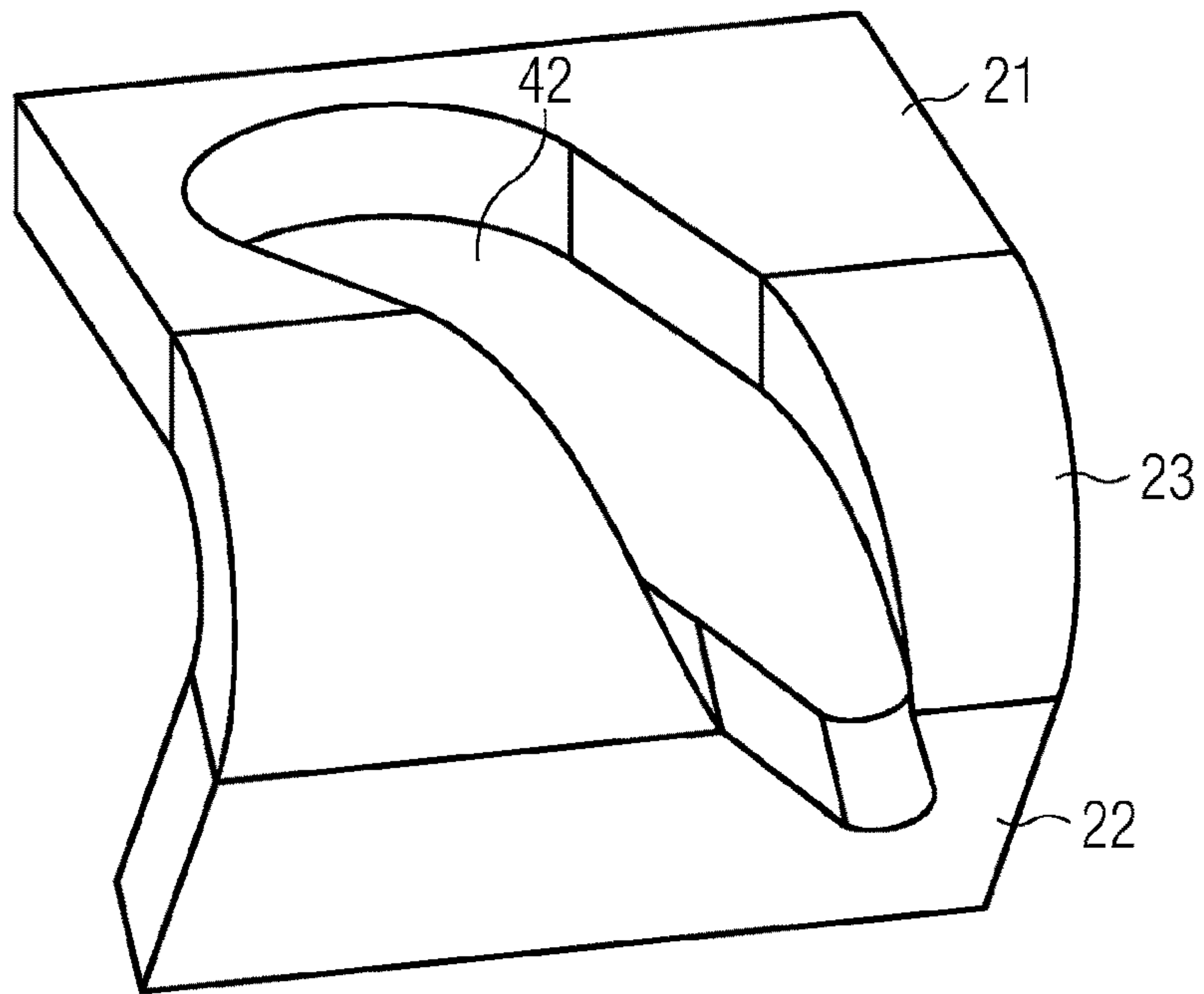


FIG 11b

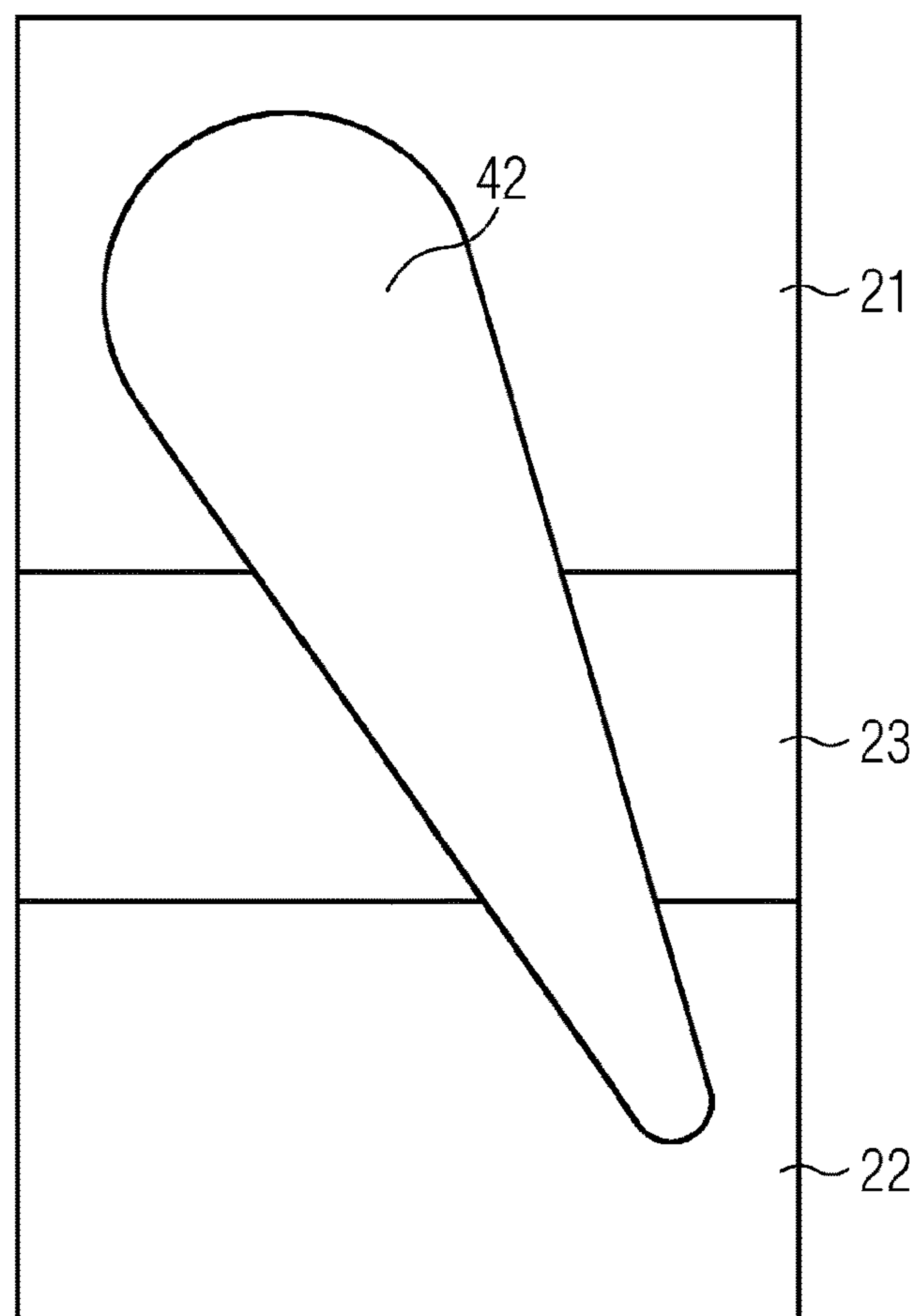


FIG 12a

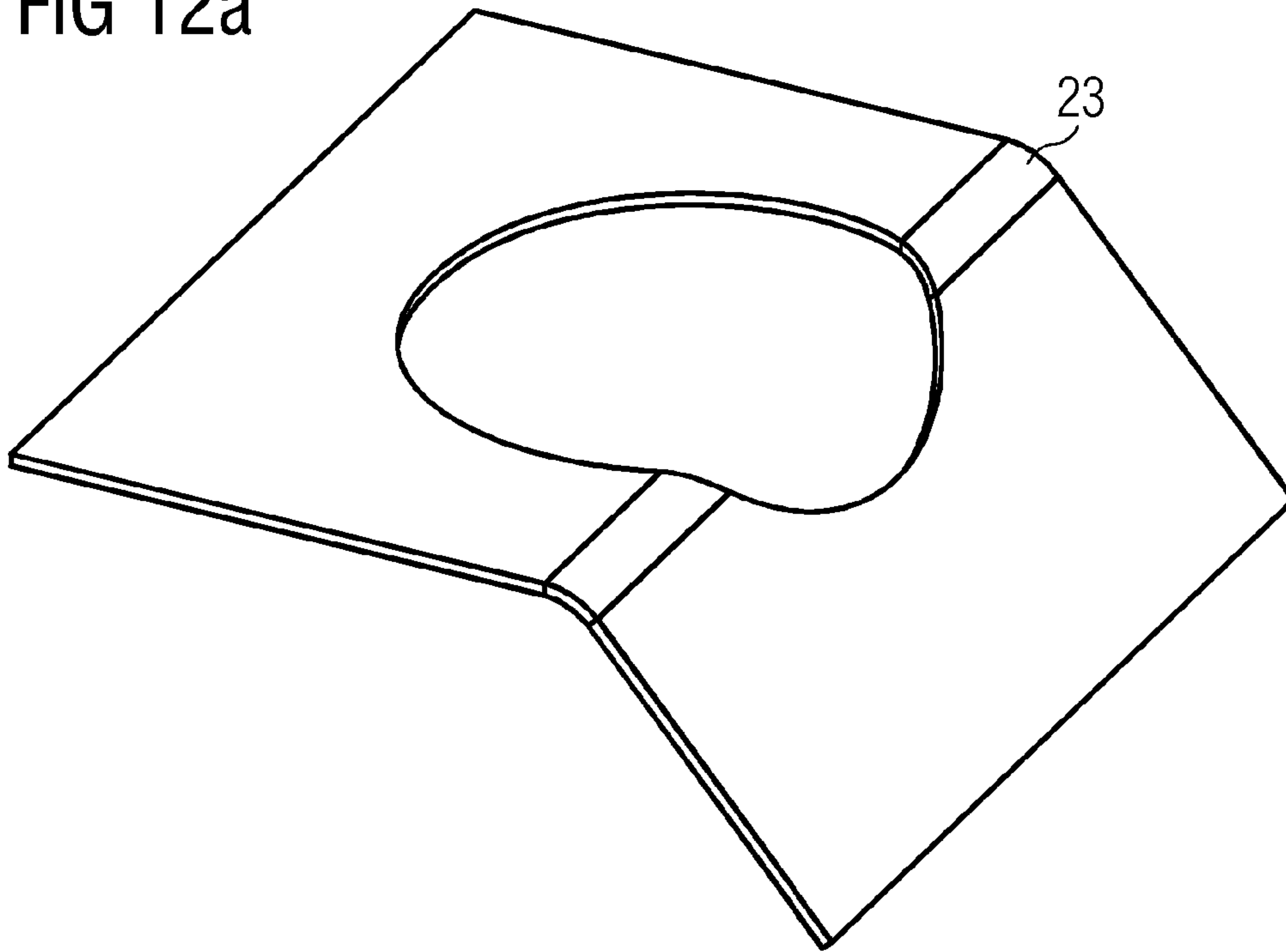


FIG 12b

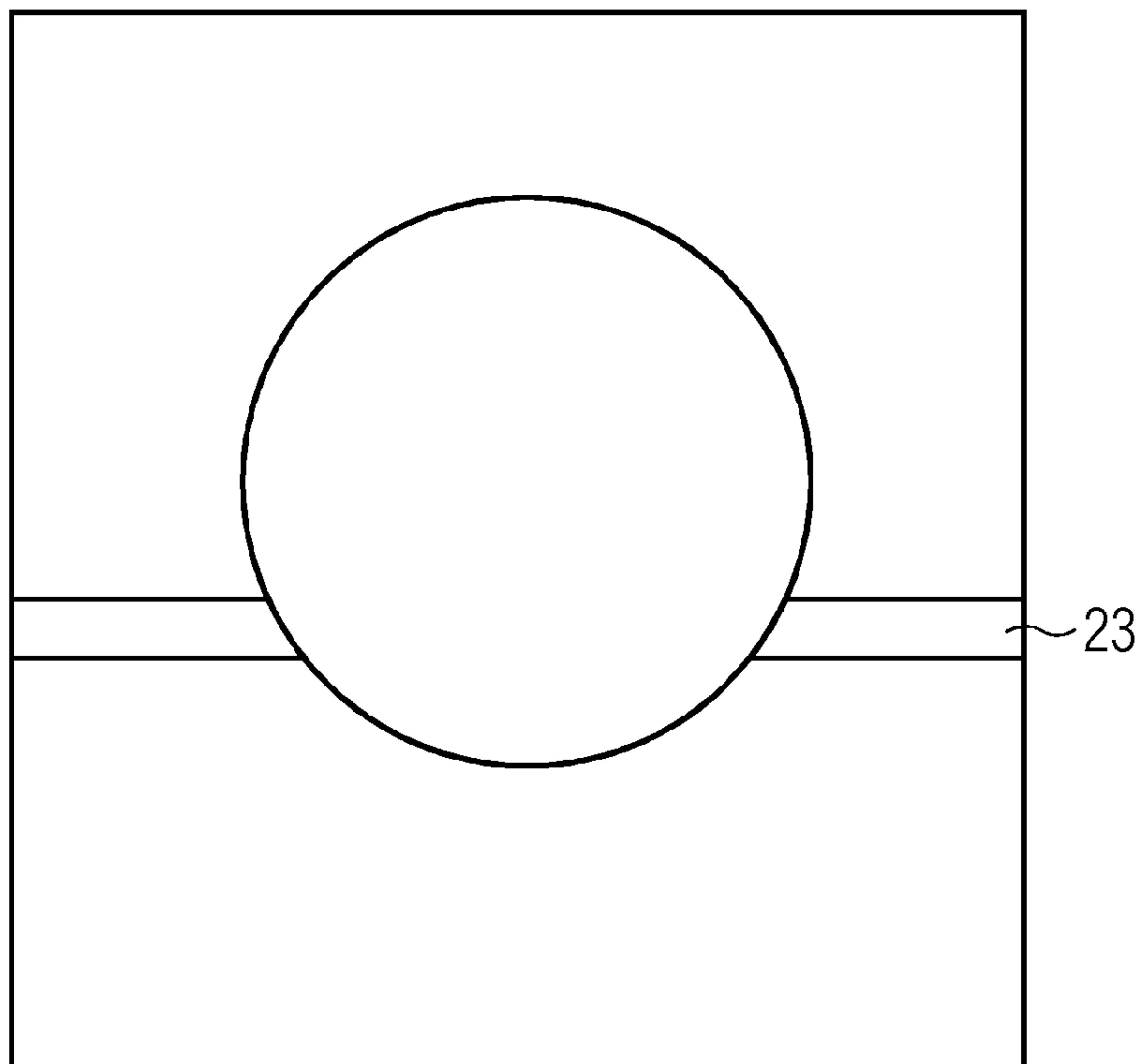


FIG 13a

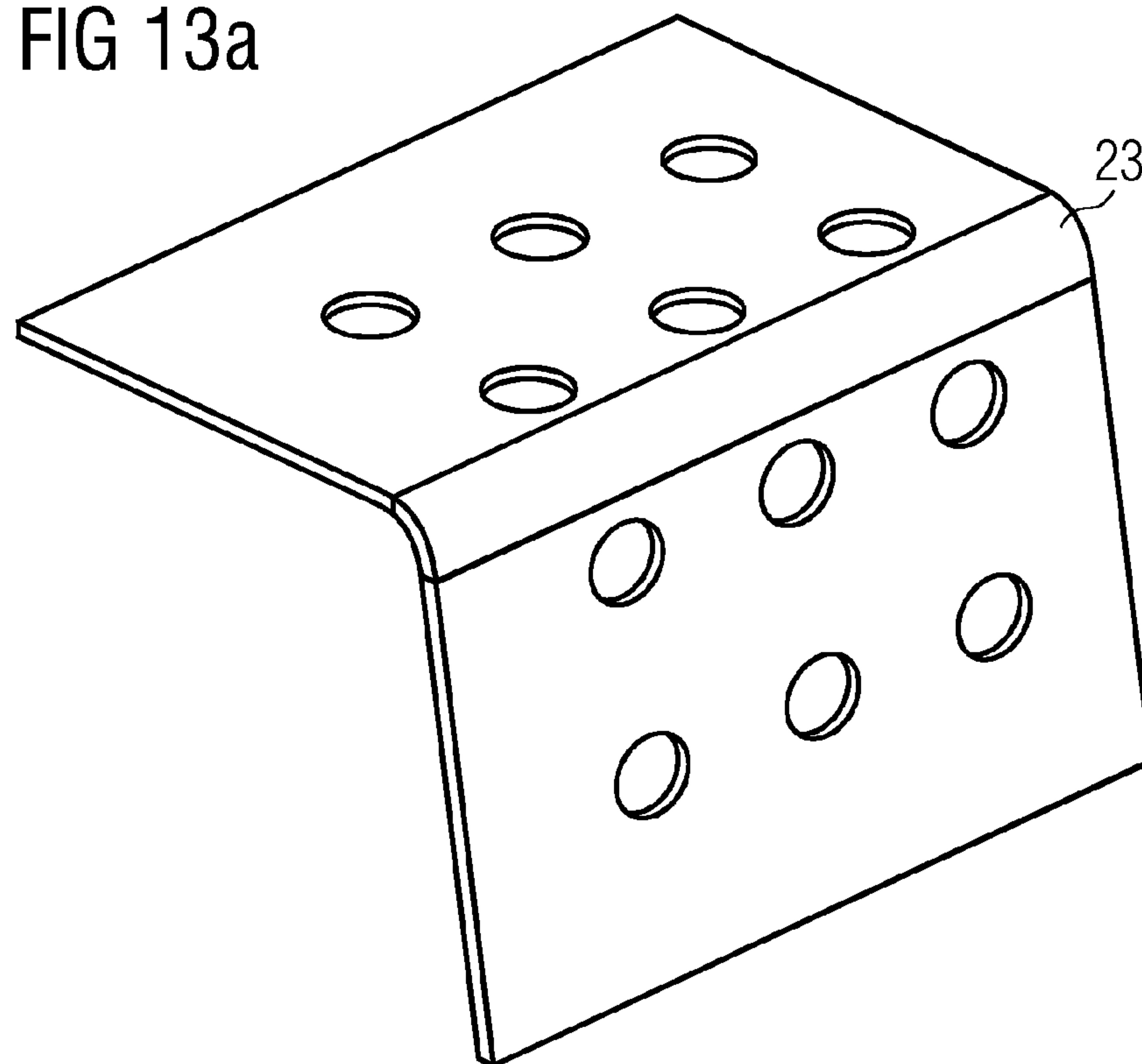


FIG 13b

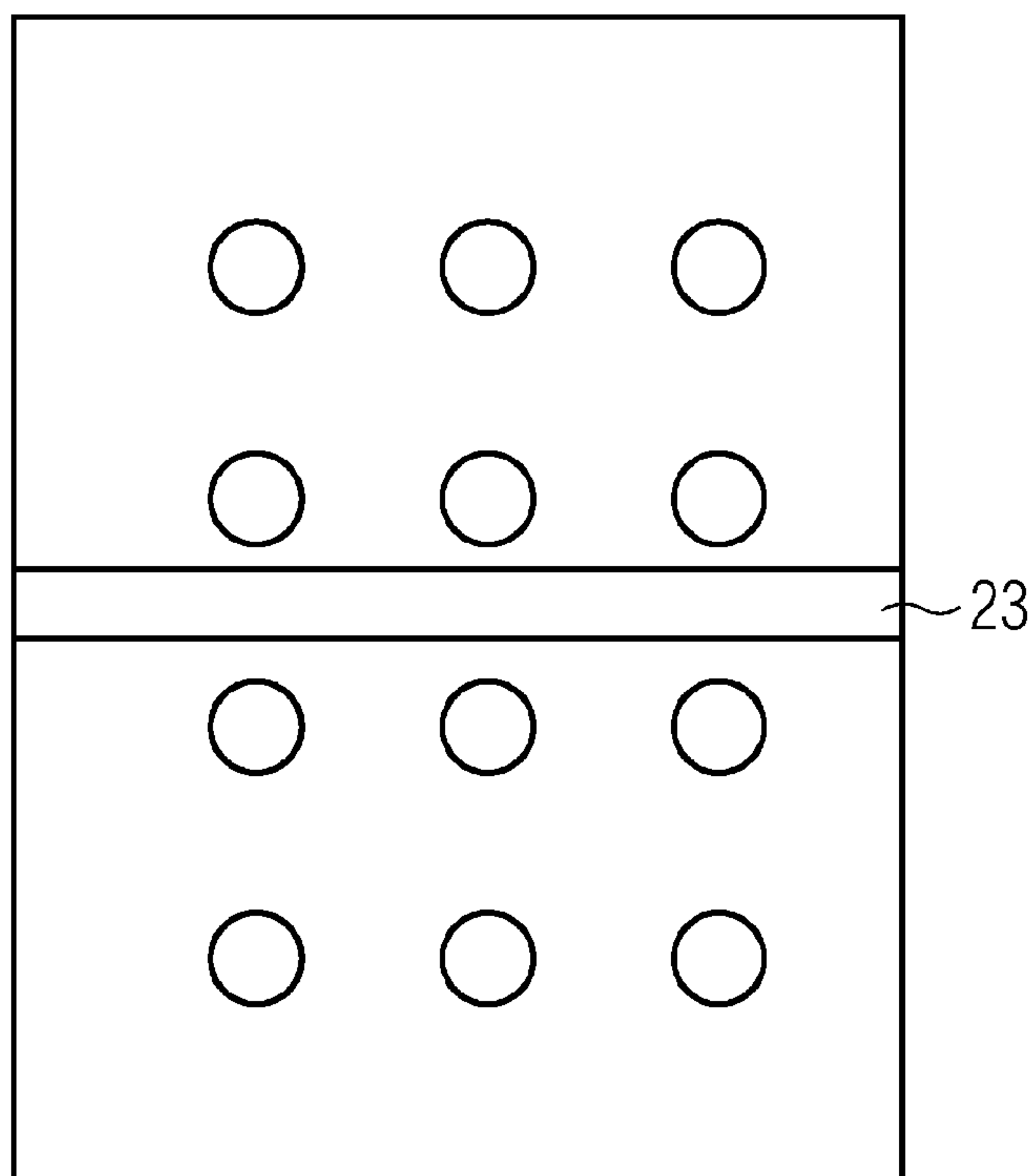


FIG 14a

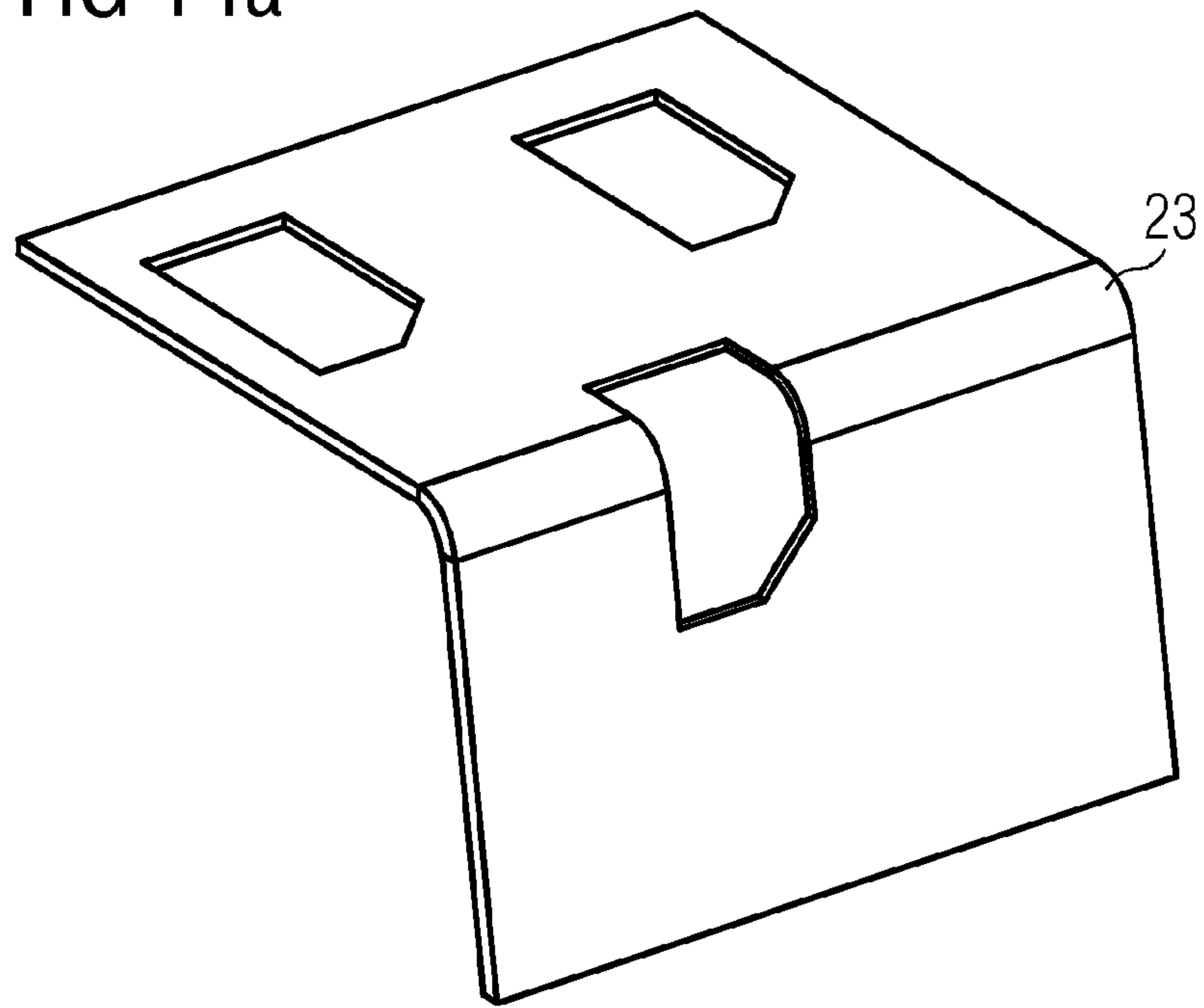


FIG 14b

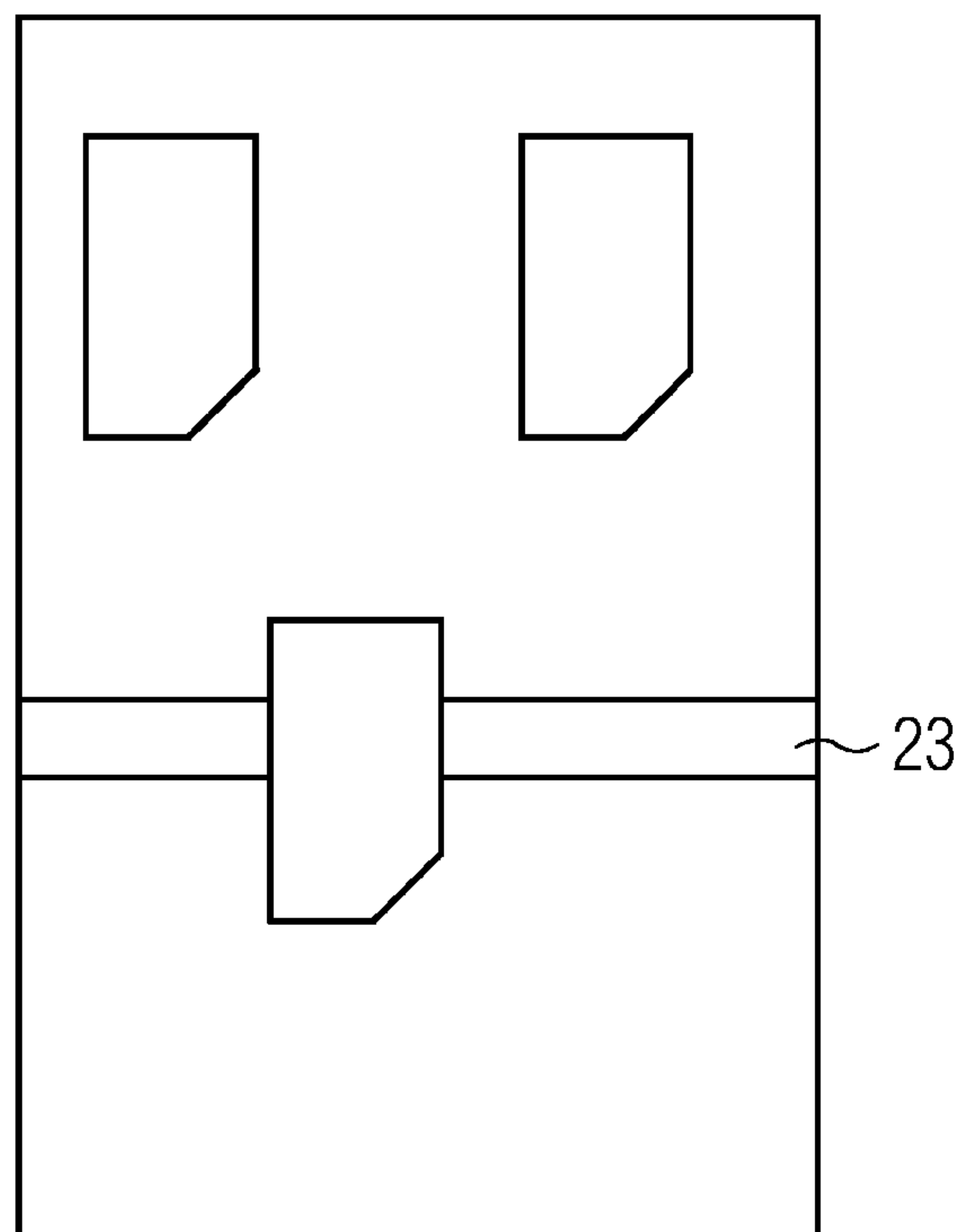


FIG 15a

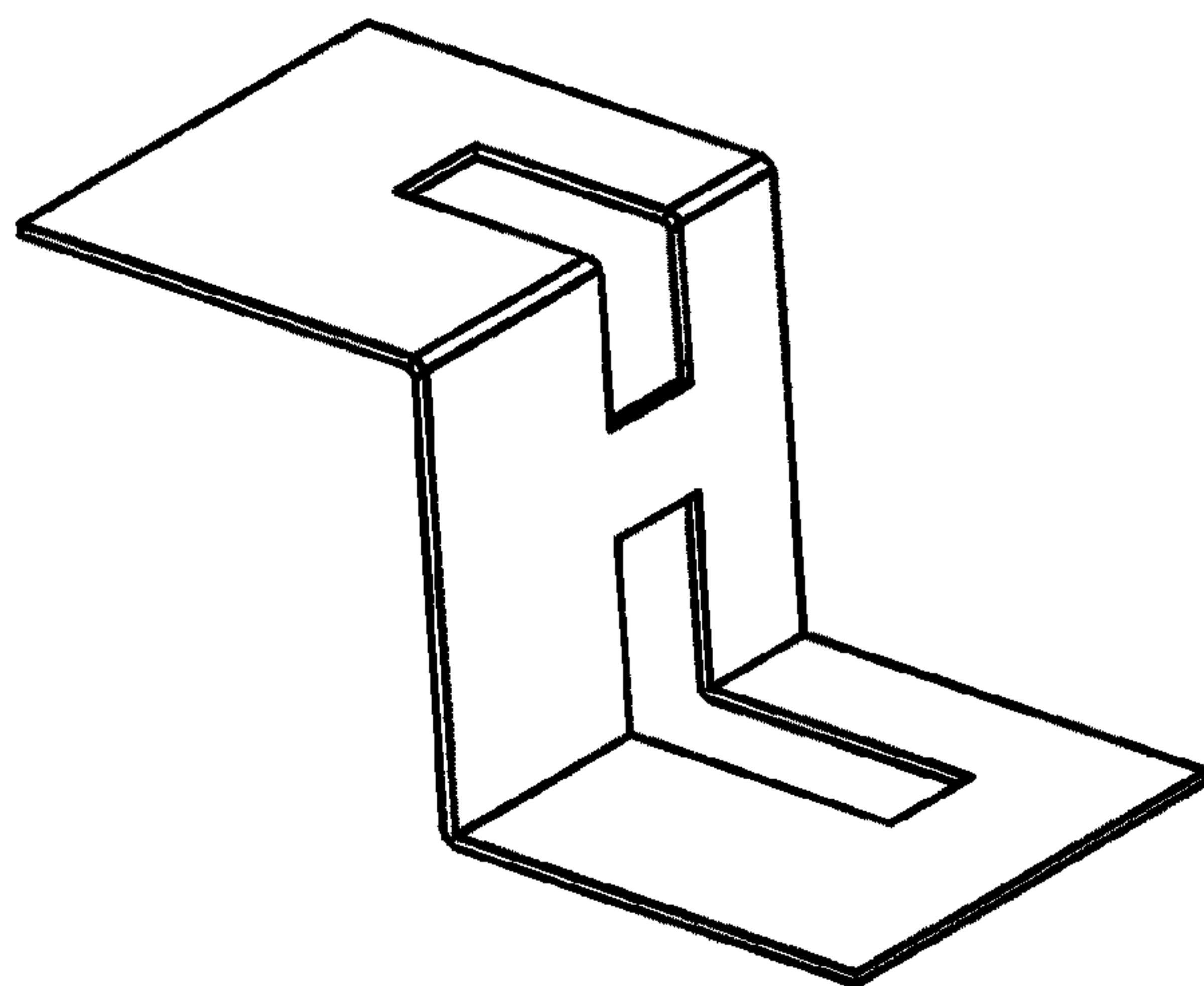


FIG 15b

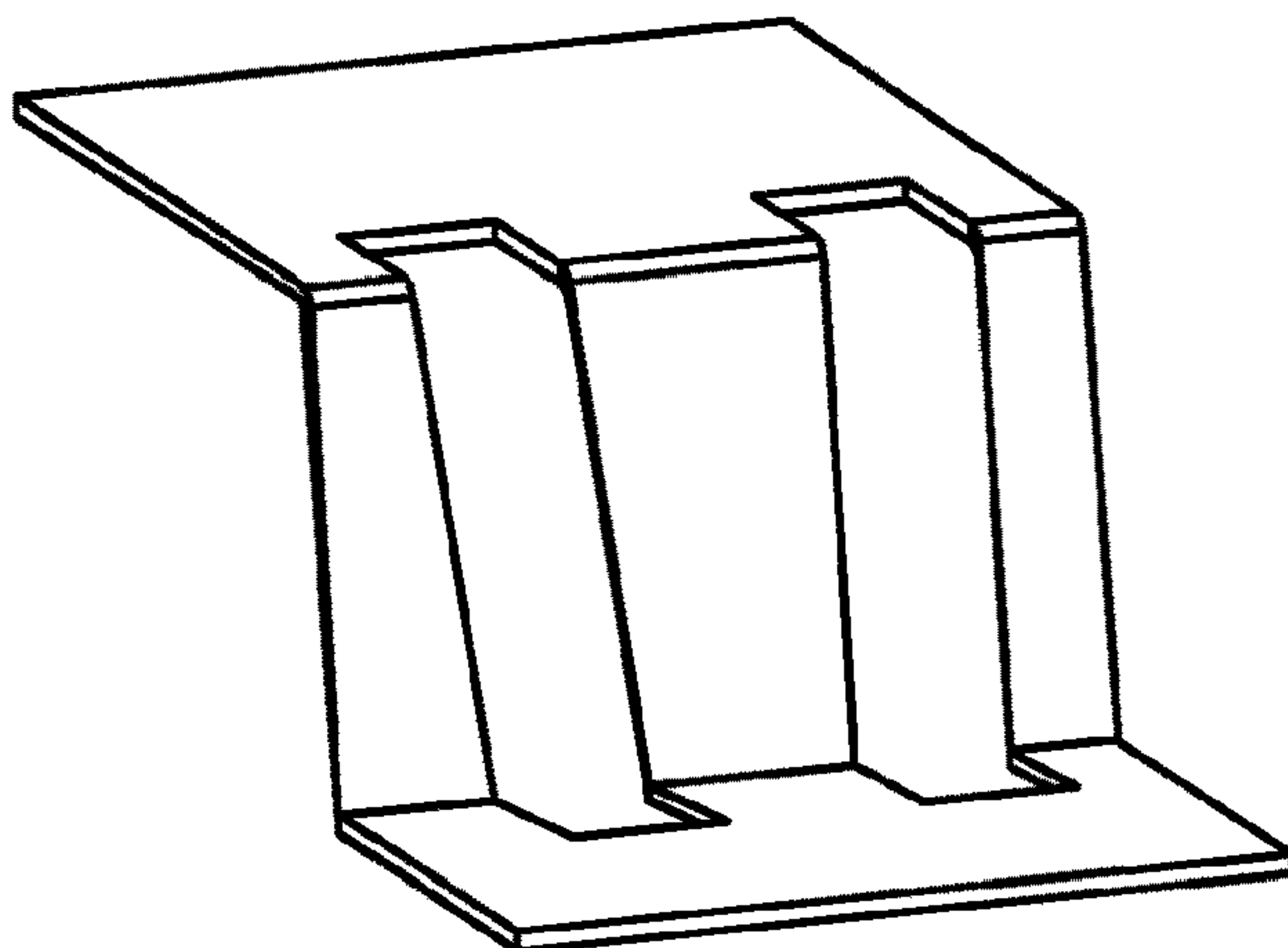


FIG 15c

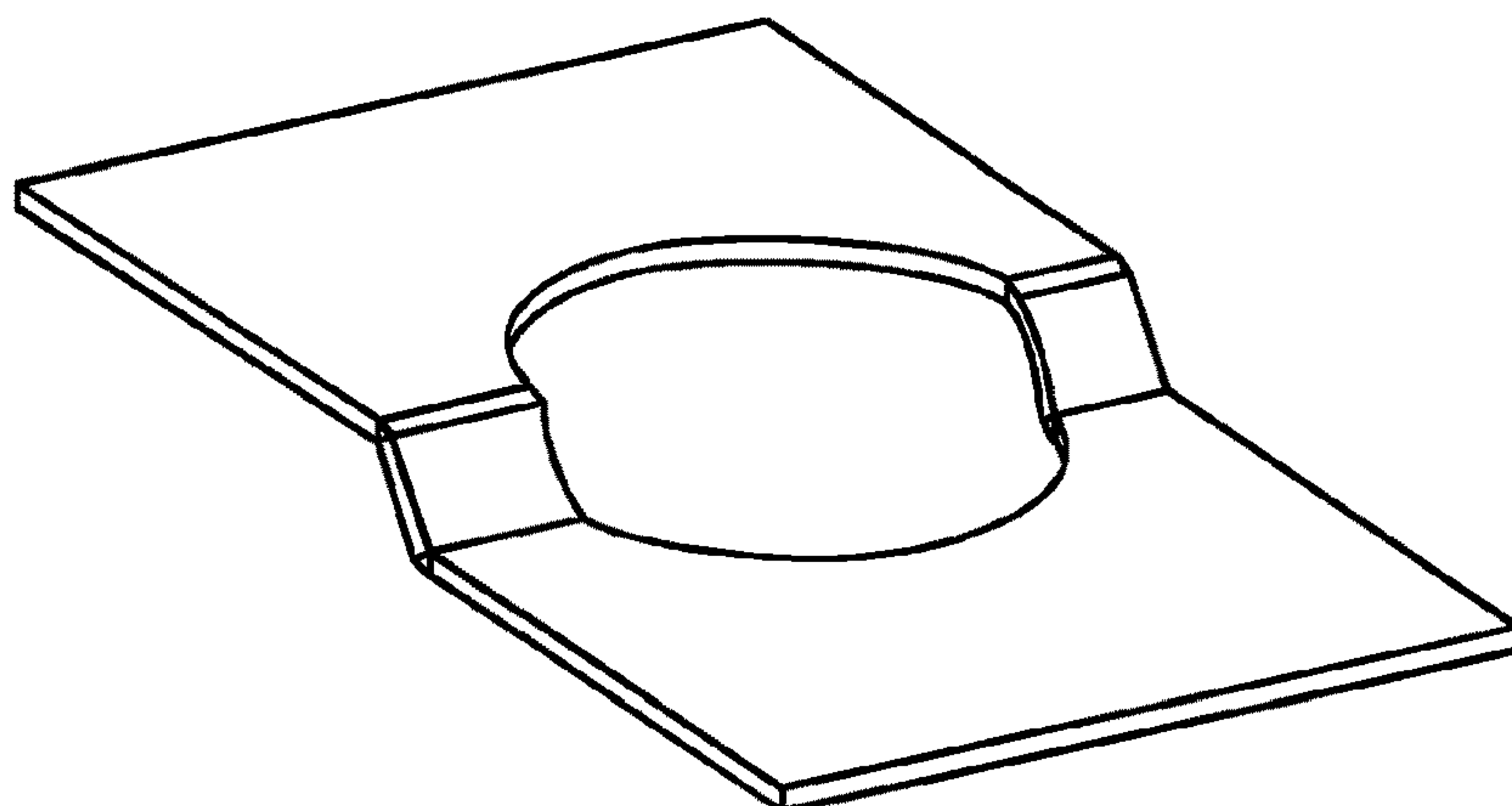


FIG 15d

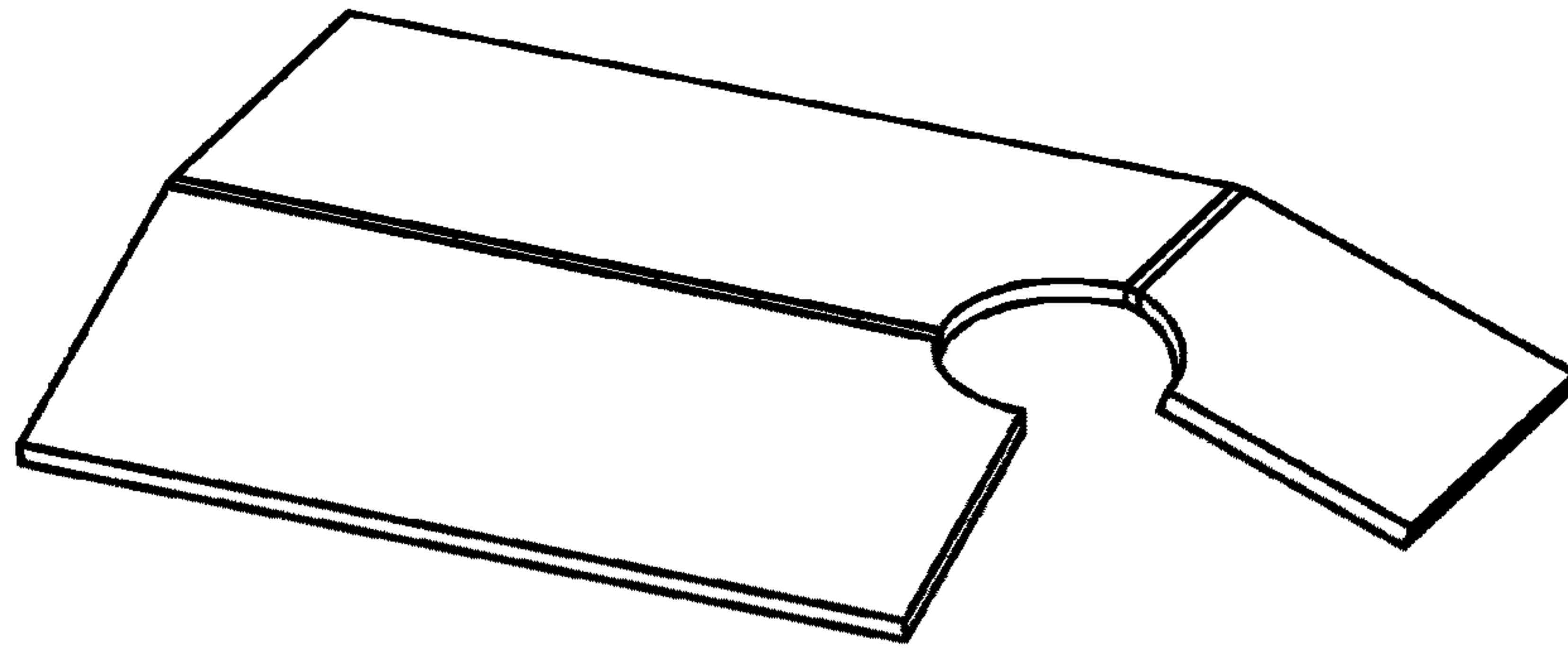


FIG 15e

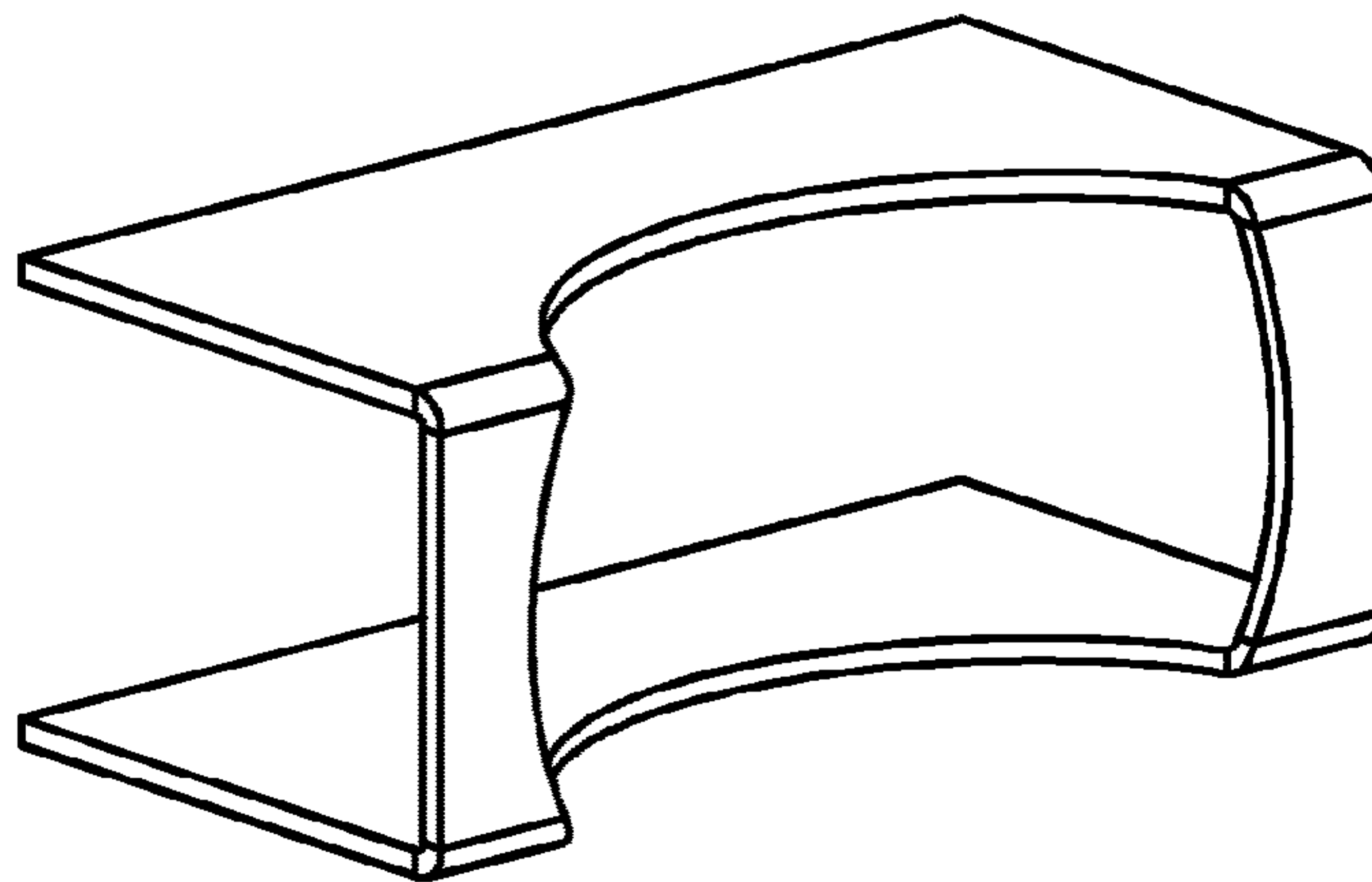


FIG 15f

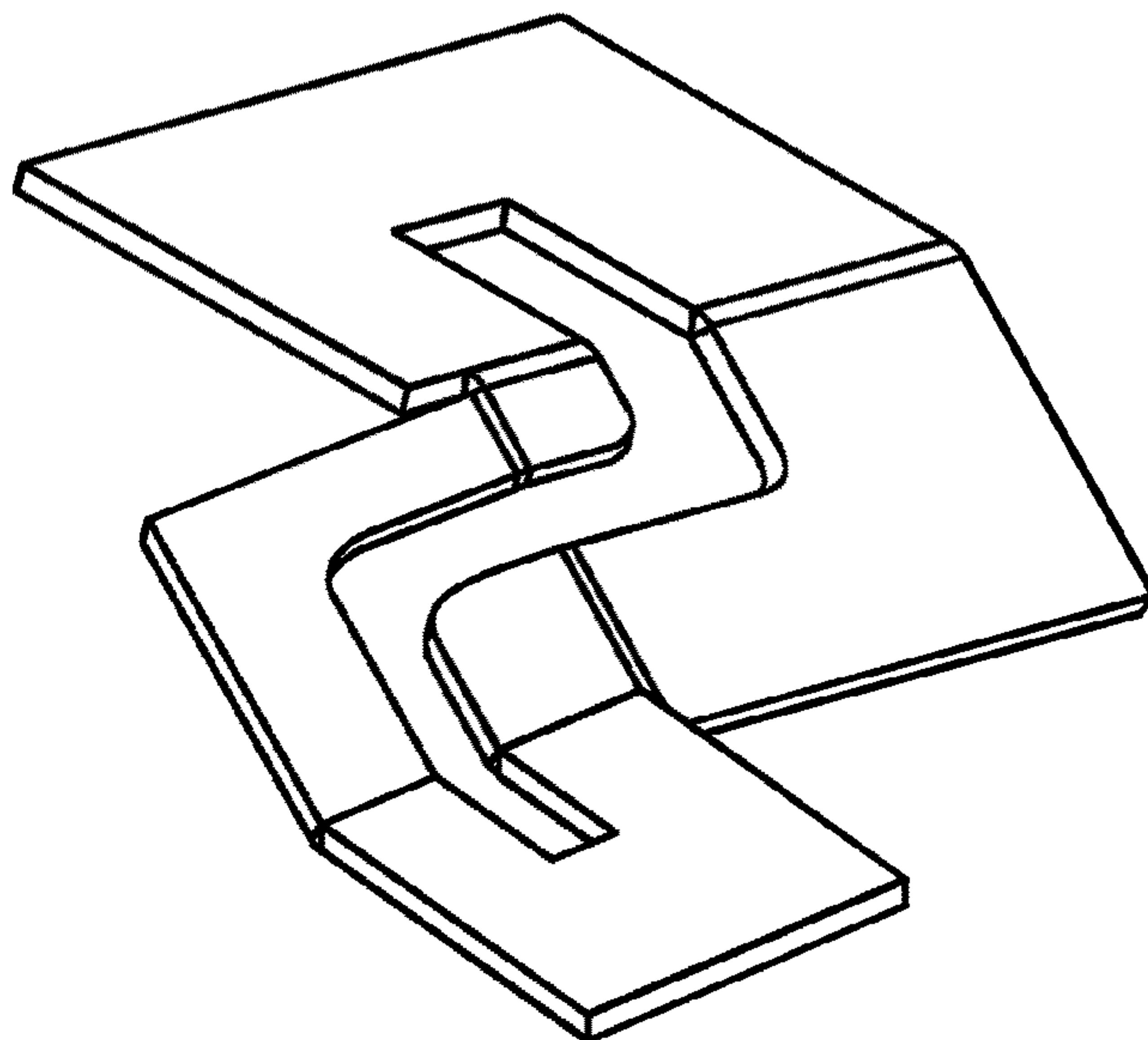
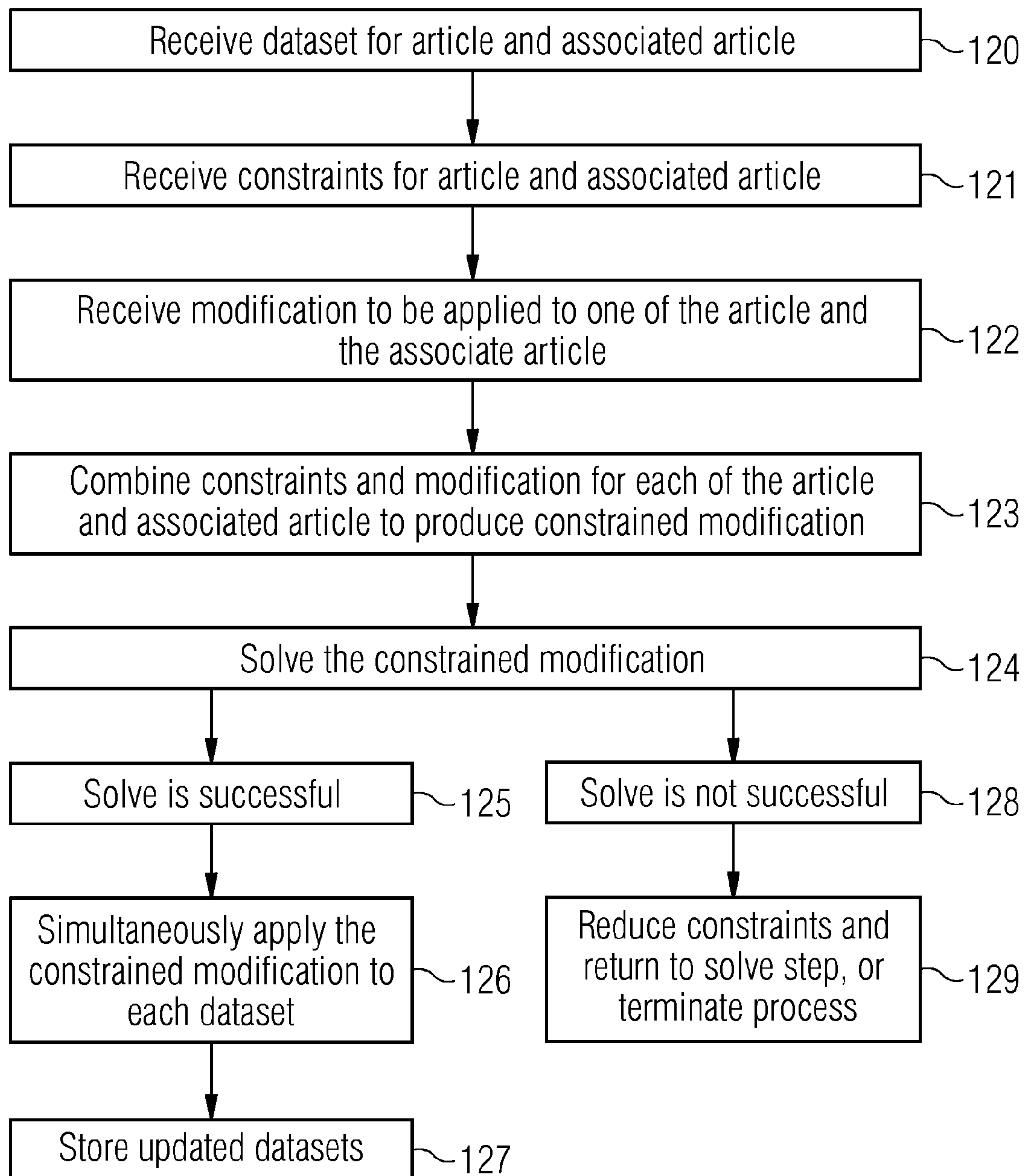


FIG 16



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**METHOD AND SYSTEM FOR MULTIPLE
VIEWS COMPUTER-AIDED-DESIGN
INCLUDING PROPAGATION OF EDIT
OPERATIONS ACROSS VIEWS WHILE
ENSURING CONSTRAINTS CONSISTENCY**

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED
APPLICATIONS

This application is the US National Stage of International Application No. PCT/EP2017/051371 filed Jan. 24, 2017, and claims the benefit thereof. The International Application is incorporated by reference herein in its entirety.

TECHNICAL FIELD

This present disclosure relates to the general field of computer aided design, drafting (“CAD”), manufacturing (“CAM”) and visualisation systems (individually and collectively “CAD systems”), product lifecycle management (“PLM”) systems, and similar systems, that manage data for products and other items (collectively, “Product Data Management” systems or PDM systems).

BACKGROUND OF THE DISCLOSURE

PDM systems manage PLM and other data. Improved methods and systems are desirable.

SUMMARY OF THE DISCLOSURE

Various disclosed embodiments include methods for modifying a computer aided design (CAD) system model in a modelling system.

A method of modifying a computer aided design (CAD) system model, the method performed on a data processing system may comprise receiving a dataset of co-ordinates representing an article in 2-dimensions, or representing an associated article in 3-dimensions; receiving 2D constraints for the article and 3D constraints for the associated article to be applied to any changes to the dataset of co-ordinates for the article or the associated article; receiving a modification to be applied to either the dataset of the article or to the dataset of the associated article; combining the relevant 2D and 3D constraints with the modification to produce a constrained modification for each of the article and associated article; solving the constrained modification in 2-dimensions and in 3-dimensions, to determine whether a solution exists in which all constraints are met; if the solve is successful, simultaneously applying the constrained modification to each dataset; and, storing updated datasets for the article and for the associated article; or, if the solve fails, reducing the constraints and returning to the solve step, or terminating the process.

A data processing system may include a processor; and an accessible memory, the data processing system particularly configured to carry out the steps of receiving a dataset of co-ordinates representing an article in 2-dimensions, or representing an associated article in 3-dimensions; receiving 2D constraints for the article and 3D constraints for the associated article to be applied to any changes to the dataset of co-ordinates for the article or the associated article; receiving a modification to be applied to either the dataset of the article or to the dataset of the associated article; combining the relevant 2D and 3D constraints with the modification to produce a constrained modification for each of the article and associated article; solving the constrained modi-

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fication in 2-dimensions and in 3-dimensions to determine whether a solution exists in which all constraints are met; if the solve is successful, simultaneously applying the constrained modification to each dataset; and, storing updated datasets for the article and for the associated article; or, if the solve fails, reducing the constraints and returning to the solve step, or terminating the process.

A non-transitory computer-readable medium encoded with executable instructions that, when executed, cause one or more data processing systems to perform a method of modifying a computer aided design (CAD) system model, the method performed on a data processing system, the method comprising receiving a dataset of co-ordinates representing an article in 2-dimensions, or representing an associated article in 3-dimensions; receiving 2D constraints for the article and 3D constraints for the associated article to be applied to any changes to the dataset of co-ordinates for the article or the associated article; receiving a modification to be applied to either the dataset of the article or to the dataset of the associated article; combining the relevant 2D and 3D constraints with the modification to produce a constrained modification for each of the article and associated article; solving the constrained modification in 2-dimensions and in 3-dimensions, to determine whether a solution exists in which all constraints are met; if the plausibility check is passed, simultaneously applying the constrained modification to each dataset; and, storing updated datasets for the article and for the associated article; or, if the solve fails, reducing the constraints and returning to the solve step, or terminating the process.

The foregoing has outlined rather broadly the features and technical advantages of the present disclosure so that those skilled in the art may better understand the detailed description that follows. Additional features and advantages of the disclosure will be described hereinafter that form the subject of the claims. Those skilled in the art will appreciate that they may readily use the conception and the specific embodiment disclosed as a basis for modifying or designing other structures for carrying out the same purposes of the present disclosure. Those skilled in the art will also realize that such equivalent constructions do not depart from the scope of the disclosure in its broadest form.

Before undertaking the DETAILED DESCRIPTION below, it may be advantageous to set forth definitions of certain words or phrases used throughout this patent document: the terms “include” and “comprise,” as well as derivatives thereof, mean inclusion without limitation; the term “or” is inclusive, meaning and/or; and the term “controller” means any device, system or part thereof that controls at least one operation, whether such a device is implemented in hardware, firmware, software or some combination of at least two of the same. It should be noted that the functionality associated with any particular controller may be centralized or distributed, whether locally or remotely. Definitions for certain words and phrases are provided throughout this patent document, and those of ordinary skill in the art will understand that such definitions apply in many, if not most, instances to prior as well as future uses of such defined words and phrases. While some terms may include a wide variety of embodiments, the appended claims may expressly limit these terms to specific embodiments.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

An example of method and system according to the present disclosure will now be described with reference to the accompanying drawings in which:

FIG. 1 is a block diagram of a data processing system in which an embodiment can be implemented;

FIG. 2 illustrates a sheet material model, in 2-dimensions;

FIG. 3 illustrates the geometry of the model of FIG. 2;

FIG. 4 illustrates a sheet material model of a simple bend applied to the model of FIG. 2, in 3-dimensions;

FIG. 5 illustrates the geometry of the model of FIG. 4;

FIGS. 6a and 6b illustrate an example of bent sheet and its associated flat stock to which the method of the present disclosure may be applied;

FIGS. 7a and 7b illustrates the effect of changing bent sheet and its associated flat stock without applying the method of the present disclosure;

FIG. 8 illustrates the geometry of the model of FIG. 4 in more detail;

FIG. 9 is an illustration of the geometry for FIGS. 6a and 6b;

FIG. 10 is a further illustration of the geometry for FIGS. 6a and 6b;

FIGS. 11a and 11b illustrate examples having had the method of the present disclosure applied;

FIGS. 12a and 12b illustrate a further example of bent sheet and its associated flat stock to which the method of the present disclosure may be applied;

FIGS. 13a and 13b illustrate a further example of bent sheet and its associated flat stock to which the method of the present disclosure may be applied;

FIGS. 14a and 14b illustrate a further example of bent sheet and its associated flat stock to which the method of the present disclosure may be applied;

FIGS. 15a to 15f illustrate a number of different examples of bent sheets for which the method of the present disclosure may be applied;

FIG. 16 is a flow diagram of a method of modifying a model in accordance with the disclosed embodiments.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

The embodiments of FIGS. 1 to 16 used to describe the principles of the present disclosure in this document are by way of illustration only and should not be construed in any way to limit the scope of the disclosure. Those skilled in the art will understand that the principles of the present disclosure may be implemented in any suitably arranged device, apparatus, system, or method.

FIG. 1 illustrates an example of a data processing system in which an embodiment of the present disclosure may be implemented, for example a CAD system configured to perform processes as described herein. The data processing system 1 comprises a processor 2 connected to a local system bus 3. The local system bus connects the processor to a main memory 4 and graphics display adaptor 5, which may be connected to a display 6. The data processing system may communicate with other systems via a wireless user interface adaptor connected to the local system bus 3, or via a wired network, e.g. to a local area network. Additional memory 8 may also be connected via the local system bus. A suitable adaptor, such as wireless user interface adaptor 7, for other peripheral devices, such as a keyboard 9 and mouse 10, or other pointing device, allows the user to provide input to the data processing system. Other peripheral devices may include one or more I/O controllers such as USB controllers, Bluetooth controllers, and/or dedicated audio controllers (connected to speakers and/or microphones). It should also be appreciated that various peripherals may be connected to the USB controller (via various USB ports) including input devices (e.g., keyboard, mouse, touch screen, trackball,

camera, microphone, scanners), output devices (e.g., printers, speakers), or any other type of device that is operative to provide inputs or receive outputs from the data processing system. Further it should be appreciated that many devices referred to as input devices or output devices may both provide inputs and receive outputs of communications with the data processing system. Further it should be appreciated that other peripheral hardware connected to the I/O controllers may include any type of device, machine, or component that is configured to communicate with a data processing system. Further, systems may use other types of input devices to provide inputs for manipulating objects such as a mouse, pointer, touch pad, drawing tablet, track ball, joystick, keypad, keyboard, camera, motion sensing device that captures motion gestures, or any other type of input device capable of providing the inputs described herein.

In CAD systems, a user may wish to model a design for an object, generate manufacturing instructions for manufacturing that object, or make modifications to the design or manufacturing instructions. Modifications to the design in one format may have an unexpected or undesirable effect on the design in another format, in particular when determining production line processes, such as cutting and assembling sheet metal or other parts which may be bent into shape, so it is desirable to achieve consistent behaviour when an edit is applied to any element of a shape.

The present disclosure relates to a system and method for controlling behaviour of edits in a variational system. When editing shapes in three dimensions within a variational system, such as Synchronous Technology, the behaviour produced in the equivalent part in two dimensions is not always clear. This can result in complex 2d shapes which are difficult to handle on a production line.

Although this disclosure refers mainly to example of sheet metal patterns, cut-outs and bending, it is equally applicable to any shape which is both bendable and predictable in how it behaves when it is bent. For example, thin walled tubes or piping which require an opening to join another such tube or piping may be bent about a cylinder using this technique.

In this disclosure, an article and an associated article are represented in a computer aided design model in their 2-D and 3-D form, then a transform is applied comprising a constrained modification, the transform applying the same relative change to the co-ordinates of each of the article and associated article simultaneously. This has the benefit that the data processing system avoids unnecessary calculations which would generate a result that could not be applied to the flat stock for manufacturing, whilst allowing the user to apply a change to either model.

FIG. 2 illustrates a sheet material 20 in flat space, i.e. in 2-dimensions. FIG. 4, described below, illustrates the corresponding sheet material 20 in 3 dimensions, after a simple bend has been applied. The flat sheet may be considered to comprise three sections, end sections 21, 22 and a mid-section 23. Each end section has an upper and lower surface 26, 27 and the mid-section has an upper and lower surface 25, 24. The sheet may be represented geometrically as illustrated in FIG. 3. The sheet has a neutral layer 28, cross section thickness, t and mid-section length, l .

FIG. 4 illustrates the sheet of material 20 after it has been bent into a different orientation. During manufacture of a part, the initially flat sheet, shown in FIG. 2, is typically bent by applying a force to one end of sheet, whilst clamping the other end in place. When bent, the relationship of the top and bottom surfaces 26, 27 of the end sections 21, 22, effectively plates, remains unaltered, as compared to the flat sheet. After the bend has been applied, the midsection 23, the blend

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angle between the plates, is compressed on one surface **24** and stretched on the opposite surface **25**. FIG. **5** represents the bent sheet geometrically showing the neutral layer **28** in which the bend length, l in the neutral layer is now the length of an arc $r_n \theta$, where r is the bend radius, θ the bend angle, f the neutral factor and r_n a neutral radius equal to $r+tf$. The neutral layer illustrated in FIGS. **3** and **5** is where the length remains the same, when a bend is formed, despite the bend causing the inside layer **24** to compress and the outside layer **25** to stretch. The neutral factor is set dependent on material properties of the sheet material being modelled. The constructions and calculations in this method are all based on this neutral layer and neutral radius.

When preparing a CAD design of a product to be manufactured from sheet material, the engineer needs to design the final form to match the functional requirement, whilst also optimising the manufacturing process. Manufacturing from sheets, which may comprise sheet metal, plastic, composite, or other material as required by the application, typically comprises a first stage in which the flat stock sheet material is cut to shape and a second stage in which this flat shape is bent into the required form. It is desirable that the shape in the flat is as simple as possible with as few cuts required in the process as possible. Furthermore, in some cases it may be beneficial to minimise changes of direction in the 2d cuts, for example when using laser cutting, as each change of direction requires the laser to dwell, which may lead to overheating.

FIGS. **6a** and **6b** illustrate an example of bent sheet and its associated flat stock to which the method of the present disclosure may be applied. A cut-out **35** has been made in the sheet **20** across a bend region **23**. FIG. **6a** shows the 3d bent state and FIG. **6b** shows the 2d flat state. The cut-out **35** in the flat has a teardrop shape. Faces **30** and **31** are coincident in the flat which makes a single cut possible during the 2d part of the manufacturing process. Faces **36** and **37** are similarly coincident in the flat. The effect of bending this cut-out **35** can be seen in FIG. **6a**, where some sections **29**, **30**, **31**, **32** maintain substantially parallel upper and lower surfaces, whereas in the bend region **23**, the cut-out **35** shows the different lengths of the lower and upper surfaces **33**, **34** where compression and stretching have occurred. In this example, the flat shape is fairly simple and it is desirable to maintain certain aspects of the shape in the flat even when edits are applied to the 3d model, for example to reduce the number of cuts required during the manufacturing process. However, conventional modelling techniques do not keep these coincidence constraints in the flat after applying an edit in 3d.

The example of FIGS. **7a** and **7b** shows how increasing the bend angle of the bend in 3d as shown in FIG. **7a** may affect the shape of the cut-out **38** in the 2d sheet shown in FIG. **7b**. The flat sheet of FIG. **7b** shows the bend region **23** and the unaffected regions **21**, **22**, but unlike the example of FIG. **6b**, where the cut-out **35** is teardrop shaped, in FIG. **7b**, the cut-out **38** is no longer teardrop shaped, but has been distorted. This distortion **41** means that the cut-out **38** of FIG. **7b** requires a greater number of cuts during manufacturing than the cut-out **35** of the FIG. **6b** example. The increase in the number of cuts is time consuming and costly. The present disclosure addresses the problems discussed above.

Conventionally, to avoid changes to the 2d model which add unacceptable complication and cost to the manufacturing process, designers have made modifications to the shape of the cut-out in the flat sheet and then bent the resulting sheet to form the part as an iterative process. Each time this

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modelling process from 2d to 3d is undertaken, time and additional processing power are required and even then, this iterative process may only produce an approximate result. Alternatively, designers may only add bends, or cut-outs, at a late stage in the design process. In either case, the result is that design changes are hard to implement effectively. Furthermore, in terms of modelling, the designer may wish to edit in either of the bent and flat representations, but there is currently no way of ensuring that a change in the 3-D model does not result in a shape in the flat state that adds unacceptable complication and cost to the manufacturing process.

The present disclosure addresses this issue by applying two way associative constraints to the models. This is explained in more detail hereinafter. FIG. **8** considers the three sections **21**, **22**, **23** of the model as a fixed plate, a bend region and a movable plate. A copied representation **21a**, **22a** of the each plate's geometry in the flat, 2d space, is added to the bent geometry of FIG. **5** as shown in FIG. **8**. These copied plates **21a**, **22a** are constrained relative to their originals when in 3d space, so as to keep the length, l of the bend in the neutral layer **28** equal in flat and 3d space. This applies for all modelling edits such as moving plates, moving geometry within plates, changing the bend angle, changing the bend radius, changing the thickness, etc.

In general both plates have copies in a common flat space, but equally, as in the example shown in FIG. **8**, plate **21** may also serve as the flat space copy **21a**, thus reducing the construction. Coordinate systems are formed on the bend side of each plate in the neutral layer A_1 and B_1 . Then coordinate frame B_2 is formed in the flat space and constrained to be a distance $r_n \theta$ from A_1 as shown in FIG. **8**.

The next step is shown in FIG. **9**. With B_2 constrained in this way, the relative transform $T_{B_1 B_2}$ between B_1 and B_2 represents the relative transform that must exist between any further geometry in plate **22** and its copy **22a** in flat space. This is achieved by constraining the transforms $T_{B_1 B_2}$ to be equal, as in this example, based on the previous model of FIGS. **6a** and **6b**.

FIG. **10** shows how, with the model constrained as described with respect to FIG. **9**, the correct correspondence of any geometric element's location and orientation between its flat and 3d representations are guaranteed. Any relative changes between the plate A and B caused by moving or rotating, for example, will cause the relative transform between B_1 and B_2 to change and because the other pairs of geometries are constrained to have the same relative transform, they will adjust accordingly to maintain any other constraints in the system. The constraints are non-directional so it is also possible to move geometry in the flat and have that cause appropriate movement in the 3d representation. End sections **21**, **22** are then maintained coincident in the flat.

Therefore, it is now possible to add constraints between geometry in plate A and plate B in the common flat space. Consider the example of FIGS. **6a** and **6b**, maintaining the current conditions, i.e. coincident planes **30** and **31** in the flat, coincident planes **36** and **37** in the flat. This can be achieved by applying the constraints between the geometries in plate A and the flat space copies of B. The cut-out **42** of FIG. **11a** and **11b** shows that this produces the desired result under model change, such as increasing the bend angle for example. The result of the method shown in FIGS. **11a** and **11b** is an improvement over the result in FIGS. **7a** and **7b**, by virtue of having fewer cuts and fewer kinks in the flat. This makes the design easier to deal with in an automated cutting environment.

All manner of constraints can be similarly added in the flat. For example, if the distance between the cylinders **39**, **40** in FIGS. **6a**, **6b** needs to be maintained, to preserve the overall shape in the flat and allow use of a of a standard punch when manufacturing, then this constraint may be applied by defining a distance constraint in the flat accordingly.

The method of the present disclosure may be applied by the user specifying specific properties in the flat that are to be maintained by the system and indicating which ones are to be applied in a particular situation. For example, coincidence may be indicated, or distance, or both. Having received this particular indication the system then applies the appropriate supporting construction of the method or equivalent construction to yield the same transform relationship between the plates 2d and 3d representations.

However, the method may automate these steps. Provided that the transform taking a plate from its 3d space to its flat counterpart is defined, it is possible to automatically detect if some conditions exist in the flat. The coincidence between certain faces **30**, **31** in the flat may be automatically detected and automatically maintained. This feature is particularly useful if the model has been created elsewhere and imported into the system without any specific data about constraints. When the model is to be modified, the conditions may be determined and set as constraints.

In addition to simple constraints, this scheme enables various other programmatic methods to be applied. If the constraint system allows optional constraints, then these can be used to implement behaviour that is desired but not strictly required. For example, the flat shape could be maintained rigid as a preference. The line in the flat space corresponding to the bend axis is available for use by heuristics so, for example, the position of the cut faces, or any other faces, could be preferentially constrained relative to this giving the effect of their moving with the bend. The method is agnostic to the source of the faces under its control, so they do not have to come from explicit 'cut' operations. They could, for example, be the side faces of plates, or hole faces within the plates or any other faces associated with the plates. The method is not restricted to faces, but could be used for edges, vertices and other 'construction' geometry as needed for more advanced constructions. The relative transform maintained by this method can also be used by other non-constraint based methods to, for example, procedurally update other aspects of the design post constraint solving.

Another example, shown in FIGS. **12a** and **12b** applying a constraint in order that a change in the bent form (FIG. **12a**) maintains segments of a circle on each side of the bend **23** to be the same in the flat, i.e. keep a circle in the flat (FIG. **12b**), so that a single simple circle may be cut or punched in the flat, rather than there being discontinuities created, which are harder to deal with in the manufacturing process. FIG. **13a** and **13b** illustrate another example, this time using a suitable transform with applied constraints to maintain a regular pattern in the flat (FIG. **13b**), when the bend is changed (FIG. **13a**), so as to make the 2d process more efficient. Regular patterns can be cut or punched much more easily than irregular ones. The example of FIGS. **14a** and **14b** follow a repeated cut-out shape in the flat, but at least one of the cut-outs is across a bend. By setting the transform to constrain any changes in the 3d article to maintain the same shape for cuts across bends as the shape for cuts that are not across the bend region in 2d helps reduce the number of different punch tools required for manufacturing.

FIGS. **15a** to **15e** illustrate different examples of shapes in 3d with multiple plates and/or multiple bends. **15a** has multiple cut-outs across different bends. FIG. **15b** has multiple cut-outs across the same bends. FIG. **15c** has a single cut-out across two bends. FIG. **15d** has a partial cut-out across different orthogonal bends. FIG. **15e** has a single cut-out across two, opposed, bends. FIG. **15f** has multiple plates, cut-outs and bends. For any of the examples shown, there may be need to apply constraints of the type described above in combination with one another and the transform may be set accordingly to achieve the desired outcome in the flat, even when changes are made to a 3d model having multiple plates and/or multiple bends.

Considerable cost savings may be achieved by keeping shapes simple, such as circles which may be drilled or cut, or limiting the total number of punch shapes required on the sheet by keeping spacing of shapes constant across a bend, or keeping the same shape and spacing across bend, or keeping the same length in the flat by means of a distance constraint. The specific constraints applied will depend upon the manufacturing requirement, so any constraints may be applied to control the flat and bent state generically and simultaneously. The change may be driven from either the flat or bent state, or both and programmatic heuristics may be applied in both flat and bent space. For example, where offline changes are applied to different parts, all of which are to be manufactured from a particular sheet and those offline changes are subsequently uploaded to the model, then the changes may be applied for some parts to the 3d article and for some to the 2d associated article and the constraints ensure that every change keeps to a form that can actually be manufactured.

FIG. **16** shows a flow diagram of an example of a method according to the present disclosure. A dataset of co-ordinates representing an article in 2-dimensions, typically a sheet material, or representing an associated article in 3-dimensions, typically the sheet material after it has been subjected to a bend is received **120**. 2d constraints are received **121** for the article and 3d constraints are received **121** for the associated article. These constraints may have previously been derived and stored. The constraints are to be applied to any changes to the dataset of co-ordinates for the article or the associated article. A modification to be applied to either the dataset of the article or to the dataset of the associated article is received **122**. This modification may be in response to a previous determination by the system that a certain characteristic of the article or associated article must be altered, e.g. a pattern in the flat has been detected that cannot be manufactured, or the modification may result from the edits that the designer has applied to one or other. The designer is able to edit the model in either the 2d or 3d form and account is taken of constraints in the other dimension when the modification is applied.

The relevant 2d and 3d constraints are combined **123** with the modification to produce a constrained modification for each of the article and associated article. To avoid unnecessary processing, the constrained modification is solved **124** in 2-dimensions and in 3-dimensions. If the outcome of the solve **128** does not meet certain predetermined requirements for the sheet material to be able to be processed during manufacturing, then that modification is not applied. Optionally, if the solve fails, the system may be set up with limits to allow it to automatically reduce some of the constraints and return to the solve step. Otherwise, the process is terminated **129**. Provided that the solve is successful **125**, the constrained modification is applied simultaneously **126**

to each dataset and the updated datasets for the article and for the associated article are stored 127.

The received dataset of coordinates may be read in from a store, from another modelling system, or they may have been derived from an actual part, for example by scanning. 5 The method is particularly useful for designing parts which are to be made from sheet metal, i.e. the flat material has the same thickness throughout and undergoes a well defined process when bent, so that its behaviour in the bent state is relatively easy to predict. Any bendable and predictable 10 shapes, for example hollow tubing, when bent around a cylinder may be modelled using the method of this disclosure, as no prediction is made in the bend region.

An operating system included in the data processing system enables an output from the system to be displayed to the user on display 6 and the user to interact with the system. 15 Examples of operating systems that may be used in a data processing system may include Microsoft Windows™, Linux™, UNIX™, iOS™, and Android™ operating systems.

In addition, it should be appreciated that data processing system 1 may be implemented as in a networked environment, distributed system environment, virtual machines in a virtual machine architecture, and/or cloud environment. For example, the processor 2 and associated components may correspond to a virtual machine executing in a virtual machine environment of one or more servers. Examples of virtual machine architectures include VMware ESCi, 25 Microsoft Hyper-V, Xen, and KVM.

Those of ordinary skill in the art will appreciate that the hardware depicted for the data processing system 1 may vary for particular implementations. For example the data processing system 1 in this example may correspond to a computer, workstation, and/or a server. However, it should be appreciated that alternative embodiments of a data processing system may be configured with corresponding or alternative components such as in the form of a mobile phone, tablet, controller board or any other system that is operative to process data and carry out functionality and features described herein associated with the operation of a data processing system, computer, processor, and/or a controller discussed herein. The depicted example is provided for the purpose of explanation only and is not meant to imply architectural limitations with respect to the present disclosure. 35

The data processing system 1 may be connected to the network (not a part of data processing system 1), which can be any public or private data processing system network or combination of networks, as known to those of skill in the art, including the Internet. Data processing system 1 can communicate over the network with one or more other data processing systems such as a server (also not part of the data processing system 1). However, an alternative data processing system may correspond to a plurality of data processing systems implemented as part of a distributed system in which processors associated with several data processing systems may be in communication by way of one or more network connections and may collectively perform tasks described as being performed by a single data processing system. Thus, it is to be understood that when referring to a data processing system, such a system may be implemented across several data processing systems organized in a distributed system in communication with each other via a network. 60

Of course, those of skill in the art will recognize that, unless specifically indicated or required by the sequence of operations, certain steps in the processes described above

may be omitted, performed concurrently or sequentially, or performed in a different order.

Those skilled in the art will recognize that, for simplicity and clarity, the full structure and operation of all data processing systems suitable for use with the present disclosure is not being depicted or described herein. Instead, only so much of a data processing system as is unique to the present disclosure or necessary for an understanding of the present disclosure is depicted and described. The remainder of the construction and operation of data processing system 1 may conform to any of the various current implementations and practices known in the art.

It is important to note that while the disclosure includes a description in the context of a fully functional system, those skilled in the art will appreciate that at least portions of the mechanism of the present disclosure are capable of being distributed in the form of instructions contained within a machine-usable, computer-usable, or computer-readable medium in any of a variety of forms, and that the present disclosure applies equally regardless of the particular type of instruction or signal bearing medium or storage medium utilized to actually carry out the distribution. Examples of machine usable/readable or computer usable/readable mediums include: nonvolatile, hard-coded type mediums such as read only memories (ROMs) or erasable, electrically programmable read only memories (EEPROMs), and user-recordable type mediums such as floppy disks, hard disk drives and compact disk read only memories (CD-ROMs) or digital versatile disks (DVDs). 20

Although an exemplary embodiment of the present disclosure has been described in detail, those skilled in the art will understand that various changes, substitutions, variations, and improvements disclosed herein may be made without departing from the spirit and scope of the disclosure in its broadest form. 35

None of the description in the present application should be read as implying that any particular element, step, or function is an essential element which must be included in the claim scope: the scope of patented subject matter is defined only by the allowed claims. Moreover, none of these claims are intended to invoke 35 USC § 112(f) unless the exact words “means for” are followed by a participle. 40

The invention claimed is:

1. A method of manufacturing a product by modifying a computer aided design (CAD) system model for modelling an object, generating manufacturing instructions for manufacturing the object or making modifications to the design of the object or the manufacturing instructions via a data processing system; the method comprising: 45

receiving a first dataset of co-ordinates representing a flat stock sheet material, and a second dataset of co-ordinates representing a product to be manufactured from the sheet material;

receiving 2D constraints for the flat stock sheet material and 3D constraints for the product to be manufactured from the sheet material to be applied to any changes to the first dataset or the second dataset;

receiving a modification to be applied to either the first dataset or the second dataset;

combining at least one of the 2D and 3D constraints with the modification to produce a constrained modification for each of the flat stock sheet material and product to be manufactured from the sheet material;

solving the constrained modification in 2-dimensions and in 3-dimensions, to determine whether a solution exists in which all constraints are met and if the outcome of the solving does not meet certain predetermined 65

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requirements for the sheet material to be processed during manufacturing then that modification is not applied;

forming a first coordinate system for the flat stock sheet material;

forming a second coordinate system for the product to be manufactured from the sheet material;

determining a transform based on a difference between a coordinate of the flat stock sheet material in the first coordinate system and a corresponding coordinate of the product to be manufactured from the sheet material in the second coordinate system;

if the solve is successful, simultaneously applying the constrained modification to each of the first dataset and the second dataset using the transform applying the same relative change to the co-ordinates of each of the flat stock sheet material and the product to be manufactured from the sheet material simultaneously as a relative change between the coordinate of the flat stock sheet material in the first coordinate system and the corresponding coordinate of the product to be manufactured from the sheet material in the second coordinate system; and,

storing updated first and second datasets representing the flat stock sheet material and the product to be manufactured from the sheet material; or,

if the solve fails, reducing the constraints and returning to the solve step, or terminating the process;

inputting the stored updated second dataset for the product to be manufactured from the sheet material to a computer controlled machine; and

manufacturing the product to be manufactured from the sheet material based on the updated first and second datasets.

2. The method according to claim 1, wherein the constrained modification comprises relative transforms by which a change of a co-ordinate location in 2-dimensions is mapped to a co-ordinate location in 3-dimensions.

3. The method according to claim 1, wherein the constrained modification comprises relative-transforms by which a change of a co-ordinate location in 3-dimensions is mapped to a co-ordinate location in 2-dimensions.

4. The method according to claim 1, wherein the second dataset of co-ordinates representing a product to be manufactured from the sheet material in 3-dimensions is generated by scanning a manufactured part.

5. The method according to claim 1, wherein the modification comprises rotating a section of the 3 dimensional product to be manufactured from the sheet material around a cylinder.

6. The method according to claim 1, wherein the constraints may be received from an external source, or extracted from a store.

7. A method of manufacturing a part from sheet material, the method comprising:

manufacturing the product to be manufactured from the sheet material in accordance with claim 1 using the computer controlled machine to cut the sheet material to shape, and bend the shape into a required form for the part.

8. A manufacturing system, comprising:

a data processor comprising a processor; and an accessible memory, and a computer-controlled machine;

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wherein the data processing system is configured to carry out the steps of:

receiving a first dataset of co-ordinates representing a flat stock sheet material and a second dataset of co-ordinates representing a product to be manufactured from the sheet material;

receiving 2D constraints for the flat stock sheet material and 3D constraints for the product to be manufactured from the sheet material to be applied to any changes to the first dataset or the second dataset;

receiving a modification to be applied to either the first dataset or to the second dataset;

combining at least one of the 2D and 3D constraints with the modification to produce a constrained modification for each of the flat stock sheet material and product to be manufactured from the sheet material;

solving the constrained modification in 2-dimensions and in 3-dimensions to determine whether a solution exists in which all constraints are met and if the outcome of the solving does not meet certain predetermined requirements for the sheet material to be processed during manufacturing then that modification is not applied;

forming a first coordinate system for the flat stock sheet material;

forming a second coordinate system for the product to be manufactured from the sheet material;

determining a transform based on a difference between a coordinate of the flat stock sheet material in the first coordinate system and a corresponding coordinate of the product to be manufactured from the sheet material in the second coordinate system;

if the solve is successful, simultaneously applying the constrained modification to each of the first dataset and the second dataset using the transform applying the same relative change to the co-ordinates of each of the flat stock sheet material and the product to be manufactured from the sheet material simultaneously as a relative change between the coordinate of the flat stock sheet material in the first coordinate system and the corresponding coordinate of the product to be manufactured from the sheet material in the second coordinate system; and,

storing updated first and second datasets representing the flat stock sheet material and the product to be manufactured from the sheet material; or,

if the solve fails, reducing the constraints and returning to the solve step, or terminating the process;

inputting the stored updated second dataset for the product to be manufactured from the sheet material to the computer-controlled machine;

wherein the computer-controlled machine is configured to manufacture the product to be manufactured from the sheet material based on the updated first and second datasets.

9. A non-transitory computer-readable medium encoded with executable instructions that, when executed, cause one or more data processing systems and a computer-controlled machine to perform a method of modifying a computer aided design (CAD) system model for modelling an object, generating manufacturing instructions for manufacturing the object or making modifications to the design of the object or the manufacturing instructions, and manufacturing a product, the method comprising:

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receiving a first dataset of co-ordinates representing a flat stock sheet material and a second dataset of co-ordinates representing a product to be manufactured from the sheet material;

receiving 2D constraints for the flat stock sheet material and 3D constraints for the product to be manufactured from the sheet material to be applied to any changes to the first dataset or the second dataset;

receiving a modification to be applied to either the first dataset or the second dataset;

combining at least one of the 2D and 3D constraints with the modification to produce a constrained modification for each of the flat stock sheet material and product to be manufactured from the sheet material;

solving the constrained modification in 2-dimensions and in 3-dimensions, to determine whether a solution exists in which all constraints are met and if the outcome of the solving does not meet certain predetermined requirements for the sheet material to be processed during manufacturing then that modification is not applied;

forming a first coordinate system for the flat stock sheet material;

forming a second coordinate system for the product to be manufactured from the sheet material;

determining a transform based on a difference between a coordinate of the flat stock sheet material in the first coordinate system and a corresponding coordinate of the product to be manufactured from the sheet material in the second coordinate system;

if the plausibility check is passed, simultaneously applying the constrained modification to each of the first dataset and the second dataset using the transform applying the same relative change to the co-ordinates of each of the flat stock sheet material and the product to be manufactured from the sheet material simultaneously as a relative change between the coordinate of the flat stock sheet material in the first coordinate system and the corresponding coordinate of the product to be manufactured from the sheet material in the second coordinate system; and, storing updated first and second datasets representing the flat stock sheet material and the product to be manufactured from the sheet material; or, if the solve fails, reducing the constraints and returning to the solve step, or terminating the process;

inputting the stored updated second dataset for the product to be manufactured from the sheet material to the computer-controlled machine;

manufacturing the product to be manufactured from the sheet material based on the updated first and second datasets.

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10. The method according to claim 2, wherein the constrained modification comprises relative-transforms by which a change of a co-ordinate location in 3-dimensions is mapped to a co-ordinate location in 2-dimensions.

11. The method according to claim 1, wherein the flat stock sheet material comprises a first section, a second section and a mid-section between the first section and the second section; wherein the product to be manufactured from the sheet material comprises a fixed plate corresponding to the first section, a movable plate corresponding to the second section and a bend region corresponding to the mid-section; wherein upper and lower surfaces of the bend region have different lengths and wherein the constrained modification comprises a neutral layer of the bend region between the upper and lower surfaces having a same length as a length of a neutral layer of the mid-section between upper and lower surfaces of the mid-section.

12. The method according to claim 11, wherein the first section and the second section comprise upper and lower surfaces and wherein the constrained modification comprises that upper and lower surfaces of the fixed plate and the bend region have a same length as the upper and lower surfaces of the respective first section and the second section.

13. The method according to claim 11, wherein the bend region is configured such that the movable plate is bent at an angle relative to the fixed plate; and wherein the modification to the second dataset comprises changing the angle that the movable plate is bent relative to the fixed plate.

14. The method according to claim 11, further comprising:

forming the first coordinate system on one side of the second section;

forming a second coordinate system on one side of the movable plate; and

forming a third coordinate system on one side of the first section;

wherein the transform is determined based on a difference between the coordinates of the one side of the second section in the first coordinate system and the coordinates of the one side of the movable plate in the second coordinate system.

15. The method according to claim 14, wherein the 2D constraints comprise a distance between the first coordinate system and the third coordinate system, wherein the distance is based on the length of the neutral layer of the mid-section.

16. The method according to claim 14, wherein the transform is applied between each coordinate of the second section in the first coordinate system to each corresponding coordinate of the movable plate in the second coordinate system.

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